

## Interview with Samuel F. Hart

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR SAMUEL F. HART

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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*Q: I wonder if we could start off with your giving me a bit about your background, where and when you were born, and where you were raised?*

HART: All these tough questions.

*Q: All the tough questions.*

HART: Okay. Born in Canton, Mississippi.

*Q: Where's Canton?*

HART: Canton is 20 miles north of Jackson, center of the state. Date of birth: 1933. My father was a traveling salesman. My mother was a housewife. I have an older sister, nine years older; an older brother, seven years older. I was the baby in the family.

Grew up in a wonderful world of freedom as a white boy in a small Mississippi town, county seat, during the Depression. My family, economically, was much better off than 99 percent of the population of this little town that I lived in, which at that time had about 5,000 people, 60 percent of whom were black. And then, of the white population, you had two groups: you had the mill-town group (there was a big, hardwood lumber mill

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there), and then you had the townies. So the population really was fragmented; it was greatly compartmentalized. But as a result of this kind of compartmentalization, in a way, I grew up with very nearly total freedom, from the time I was three or four years old, to do whatever I wanted to do.

Now part of that was a function of my mother, and whether she did it because she was a brilliant child raiser or because she was a bad mother, I'm not sure. But from four years old on, if I wanted to go downtown by myself, I just walked downtown. I didn't have to ask permission; I had to say where I was going. And from age six or seven, anytime I wanted to go out into Bear Creek Swamp and camp out and spend the night, no problem, I went, maybe with one friend. My mother used to go off when I was nine or ten years old and spend a week and leave me home alone in the house, and I'd fix one meal a day, and the maid would come in and fix one meal a day.

So it was a marvelous childhood. Almost a mythical quality now—the old America.

*Q: Sounds a little bit like a touch of the book To Kill a Mockingbird.*

HART: Yes, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, captured exactly the atmosphere of Canton, Mississippi, when I grew up. It happens to be one of my favorite books. The only thing missing in my life was an Atticus Finch; he was the father that all of us would have liked to have had, or would have liked to be—a wonderful father figure.

*Q: Oh, yes, wonderful, wonderful.*

HART: I went to public school in Canton. My family was always different from other families in that my mother always wanted to know what was over the next hill. She traveled widely, and read, by Canton, Mississippi, standards of that time, widely, and instilled in me, and to a certain extent my brother and sister also, a kind of curiosity about the world. My father had none.

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I went away to high school when I was 15. I went to Georgia Military Academy, in College Park, Georgia, because Canton public schools were not very good; my family could afford this. Spent three years there, graduated, intended to be a lawyer. I wanted to go to Harvard University and then to Harvard Law School and be a lawyer.

I was admitted to Harvard and expected to go to Harvard on a Naval ROTC scholarship, when I committed one of the early errors of my life. When being interviewed by the oral panel for the Naval ROTC scholarship, they asked me if I planned to make the Navy a career. And instead of saying, "Well, this is something I'll have to decide down the line, but I certainly am giving it thought," I said, "No way, baby! You got me for four years and then I'm gone!" And I didn't get the scholarship.

So then I went to my father and I said, "I didn't get the scholarship to go to Harvard; how about you picking up the bill?" And he wouldn't do it.

And so, in a fit of pique, I accepted an appointment to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, which I decided very early on was another large mistake after I got to New London, Connecticut. I had appointments to West Point and Annapolis through the honor school system, but I flunked the physical because of hearing. Anyway, I ended up at the Coast Guard Academy, hated it from the beginning, spent seven months in there, and, finally, through a form of blackmail, got my mother to give me permission to resign, and I got out.

I ended up going to the cheapest place I could go to school, which was the University of Mississippi. And so, the next three years, I went to Ole Miss, and graduated in January of '55.

*Q: What were you taking?*

HART: Well, at Ole Miss, they had a five-year B.A., LL.B. program, and I was going to be in that. After seven months in the Coast Guard Academy, I transferred as a sophomore to Ole Miss. And you have to begin that in your junior year, if you're going to do it,

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because your last two years are mainly law-school courses instead of undergraduate-school courses. So, shortly after I got to Old Miss, I had to make a decision about what I was going to do with my program. I was taking history and political science, mainly, as undergraduate studies. And I decided, after a lot of soul searching, that I couldn't live with being a lawyer, because what I really wanted to do was be a judge and jury, and they didn't have a course for that. The idea of having to do, ethically, the things that a good, successful lawyer had to do didn't have anything to do with justice. And I was interested in justice. So I decided I couldn't cut it as a lawyer, and I didn't go to law school.

But I had a political science professor who taught International Relations at Ole Miss, and he talked one day in class about the Foreign Service, and told some story about something that happened in Czechoslovakia in 1948, and how a Foreign Service officer had predicted everything that was going to happen, but it was ignored back in Washington, blah, blah, blah. And I said, "Gee, that sounds like something I'd like to do." And so I did it.

I didn't do it right away, because I had the Army to go to first, and I did 28 months in the Army.

*Q: What did you do in the Army?*

HART: Well, I was an infantryman and a paratrooper who got assigned to an armored battalion at Fort Hood, Texas, as a personnel officer. While still a second lieutenant, got made battalion adjutant. Now the problem with that is, usually the battalion adjutant is the senior captain in the battalion, and, in Army usage, whenever anything good happens, the battalion commander tells the company commanders about it; when anything bad happens, the adjutant tells them, and for a second lieutenant to have to tell all these captains about the bad news—that their supply clerk and their mess sergeant have just been transferred to Alaska—is very dangerous for the second lieutenant. But I happened to have a good battalion commander, and he normally would protect me from the worst consequences of his acts. And after a while I became a general's aide, and so I was aide

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to the chief of staff of the Third Armored Corps. And I spent, like I said, 28 months in the military. I was an infantry officer and never served a day in the infantry; airborne and never served a day outside of airborne school in the airborne; and in armored outfits and never rode in a Jeep or an armored personnel carrier. I became a paper pusher.

From there, I went to the Fletcher School. I had taken the Foreign Service exam.

*Q: This would be about when?*

HART: This was 1957. I went in the Army in '55. In '56, in December, I took the Foreign Service exam, just because I thought it'd be interesting to see if I could pass it.

*Q: Was this the three and a half hours, one-day exam?*

HART: This was the one-day exam.

*Q: It had just switched over, I think, about that time.*

HART: It was a one-day thing. I made 69, always a good number. And I knew I'd taken the test wrong. I knew that, simply by retaking the test, I could improve the score, because I had not approached it right, given the kind of test it was. But I applied to Fletcher, and I was admitted and retook the test in the summer. They used to give them in December and June, you remember? Sometimes they gave them twice a year. I retook the test, and I got a good grade on it. So, while I was at Fletcher, I had already passed the written.

I got out of the Army in the summer of '57, and I went up to Fletcher in September, and I took the Foreign Service orals on a cold January day. I came to Washington from Boston to take the orals. I didn't want to take the orals in Boston. I would have much preferred to take the orals someplace in Mississippi, because I had served as an examiner...and I think you said you have, too?

*Q: Yes, I have.*

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HART: And you know that, in a way, the judgments made by Foreign Service examiners are influenced by the crop of candidates they happened to have had. You look great if you are a somewhat flawed diamond among a bunch of pebbles; you look like hell if you are a flawed diamond in the window of Tiffany's. I figured Boston was the window of Tiffany's for the Foreign Service exam, and I would be best off taking it in New Orleans. But I was in Boston, so as a compromise, I came to Washington.

*Q: You know, you're absolutely right. The smart Southerners were heading up to Boston to go to school, so there was pressure on the examiners going down to the South to pass somebody, and it got embarrassing if you didn't. So you understood the political maneuverability within the system very early on.*

HART: Well, so, you know, my compromise, I drove down to Washington and took the exam here. All they had at that time was the one-hour session before a panel of...I can't remember whether there were three or five.

*Q: When I was giving it, it was three.*

HART: This was in January of '58.

*Q: It may have been a little different.*

HART: And there were either three or five. I think there were probably three. I knew I'd done well on the oral, and as I left the room, I overheard a comment that I took to be favorable, which said, "Nice suit." Panels at that time made comments like that. Anyway, I got put at the top of the registry. And so I came in, in November of '58, after doing an MA at Fletcher. So that's how I got into the Foreign Service.

*Q: Did you have a regular basic-officer course?*

HART: Yes, had an A-100 course.

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*Q: Could you give me a feel for the people who were in at that time, and maybe their attitude towards the world and America's role in it?*

HART: All right. This was Eisenhower time. And I would say that the people in my class were by no means a cross-section of the American population, but were not out of the mainstream in terms of attitudes and values. As I recall, there were usually four or five A-100 classes a year at that time, and they almost all had around 25 people in them. And they had an unwritten quota system, I like to say...I'm saying this partially in jest, but I think the numbers will bear this out very closely. They would usually have two women and two Southerners, and the rest were "others." And I got in on the Southern quota.

But we had a kind of an interesting class. I think one of the things that, as you look back on it, catches your attention is that I believe that at that time—the A-100 course was 16 weeks long—at that time, if you had taken a poll in the class: Who are the most likely to succeed in Foreign Service terms? And by succeeding, I would say, really what we were talking about, at that time everybody thought they had a good shot at being an ambassador, right? Because the Service was expanding. If you had come in in the Forties, you probably had better than a 50-50 chance of being an ambassador, simply because the number of jobs increased exponentially over a period of time. If you had looked at that group of 25 people and said, "Name the half-dozen people who are most likely to become ambassadors," I think they'd have hit probably about 80 percent of them.

*Q: I think this was true of my class, too, in '55.*

HART: I think, even in the A-100 course, the peers could have picked that. I doubt that I would have been one of them. I was probably an outlaw, because I've always been an iconoclast.

But I had in my class Tom Enders and Charlie Bray. Tom was different from everybody. I mean, he was born a senior Foreign Service officer; when he was a junior officer, he was

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already a senior officer. Charlie Bray has always been an interesting person and a great schmoozer. One of the guys that I guess might have been picked (but certainly not in the top two, Enders and Bray would have been the top two) was Marshall Wiley, the oldest guy in class, who served in Kuwait and later as ambassador to Oman. He was on the tube a lot during the Gulf War and is now a lawyer here in Washington. It was pretty clear who was going to do well and who was not.

*Q: I think it's interesting to get an idea. Looking back on this now, what were the attributes that sort of stuck out then and obviously hit people later on?*

HART: You know, I'm not sure I have an answer to that, because the people who I've identified have as many contrasts as they do shared traits. Tom Enders is unique. I mean, he's a unique kind of individual.

*Q: Everybody who talks about him says the sheer brilliance and sort of the dominance there is...*

HART: Yeah, he's a dominant personality. He's six feet seven or so. He has the Harvard-Yale- Groton-monied-New England-pedigreed type of background that Foreign Service people at that time were rumored to need. He was married to an Italian countess, Qaetana. He had money; he had position; he had brilliance; he had physical presence; and he had an enormous amount of arrogance. And those things, by and large, stand you in good stead in the Foreign Service.

Charlie Bray was of a different cut. Charlie Bray had a nice touch. Not that he wasn't smart, and to some degree, I mean, I wouldn't say that anybody in the group I've talked about is arrogance-free, but Charlie's arrogance was not so palpable and he camouflaged it pretty well. Charlie achieved his ends by persuasion, by humor, by other things which were total anathema...I mean, they were just something Tom Enders would never consider. Tom Enders was dominant. Charlie was much more of a...than the other kind



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of person. I think Charlie went to Princeton, I'm not sure; so he certainly wasn't from the outback, but a different style.

What values did they have? The values of the people, I would say, were mixed. When we sat around and talked about why did you join the Foreign Service, you probably got about as many different answers then as you would today. One person said, "It was the best job I could get." Somebody else talked in romantic terms about, you know, travel and all that stuff. There were a few who talked about looking for a career that would afford excitement and perhaps a chance, once in a while, to do good, who were in the Foreign Service essentially because they thought a life of public service, in the best sense of the word, was something they had found rewarding. There were some who saw it as a way station, maybe, to something else they wanted to do.

We had a beekeeper, a professional beekeeper, a guy named Jim Powers, from Idaho, there. He only stayed for a few years, then his father died, and he had to go back and take over the family business. But it's funny, 20 years later I was in Israel, and it happened that I was charg#, and something occurred that got my name in the newspaper, during the brief days that, through administrative error, Hal Saunders, who was the assistant secretary in NEA at the time, allowed me to be charg#. Because Hal Saunders, if I read him correctly, and he's a very, very nice man personally, didn't trust economic officers to be ambassadors or Charg#s; he felt that these people were somehow disconnected from the real world. But anyway, out in Idaho, Jim Powers read this story, and I got a nice, long letter from him. And I wrote him back, and that was the end of it. I think maybe I got a Christmas card, but that was...

The two women? Used to be, at that time in the Foreign Service, if you were a woman and wanted to join the Foreign Service, the first requisite was that you had to look like Nikita Khrushchev's wife.

*Q: Nina, yes, rather dumpy.*

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HART: Yes, you had to look like Nina Khrushchev, because otherwise they were afraid that you wouldn't last more than a few months, and, after they had invested the training money, you would marry somebody and be gone. So there weren't that many good-looking women in the Foreign Service officer corps. One of them did marry a member of the class, in fact, a year or two out. And the other one, I think, resigned; I never knew what happened to her.

Of my class of 25, I guess about half ended up serving long enough to retire. As I recall, there were four people who became ambassadors.

*Q: That was about the proportion of my group, which was Class One that started in July of '55.*

HART: Now I've set up kind of a Trojan horse here, because I sounded like becoming an ambassador is a measure of the person. I do not believe that. Never have believed it and have tried not to live my life like I believed it. I always thought that whether you became an ambassador, or whatever position you held, was largely irrelevant to the business we're in. What is relevant is: Have I done my best to conduct myself as a true public servant and behave ethically and responsibly in my professional life from day to day? And to the extent you can answer yes to that, you've been a success, no matter what grade you achieved.

I personally was surprised when I got appointed. And it was serendipity occasioned; it really was. The system malfunctioned when I got an embassy; it really did.

*Q: I must say, in the interviews I've done, I've found that by far the most interesting periods for most people, even those who've become ambassadors, are really often in their junior and middle years, and often had more influence. The ambassadorial appointment sometimes could be of great moment, but this is only a part of one's career and what one is doing.*

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HART: My most interesting time was the two-plus years I spent as director of the Andean Office, and the most rewarding by far. I had one excellent year; my first year in Ecuador as ambassador was very rewarding, and after that it was really downhill.

*Q: Well, to move on, your first posting was Montevideo, where you served from '59 to '61.*

HART: Right. And you'll recall, at that time, policy was, in the Department, that new officers were assigned first to Washington—a terrible, terrible policy.

*Q: Oh, awful.*

HART: But that was what they were doing then, and practically everybody was given a Washington assignment. They went to the IES Office.

*Q: International Exchange Service.*

HART: In New York. Or they went to the Passport Office and literally ironed pictures on the passports. Literally.

*Q: That's just awful. People don't join to do that.*

HART: Or they wormed their way in the bowels of INR, which was housed in some God awful place somewhere. And those were the initial assignments of most of my classmates.

Three of us got overseas assignments. Jim Powers, the beekeeper, went as a GSO to El Salvador, assistant GSO probably. We had somebody who went as a consular officer somewhere. And I was a political officer in Montevideo. Now you can imagine that there were some people who thought that Parker Hart was my father or something like that; that, you know, I had White House connections.

*Q: Parker Hart being a major Arab hand in Near Eastern Affairs, and your name being Hart...*

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HART: Well, I think Parker Hart even at that time was a career man at State—you were forever seeing the guy around there—and people assumed that I had some kind of political connections. I don't know how it happened that I went to Montevideo.

I got married just before I left, married a sweetheart from Fletcher, and we went to Montevideo. I landed as the junior officer in the Political Section and was given the best portfolio of any reporting officer in the embassy. I was, what, 25 years old? And I was given Communist Party Affairs, Cuban Affairs, Student Affairs, Socialist Party Affairs, and the universities.

*Q: Oh, boy, that's where all the action was, wasn't it.*

HART: That's where all the action was. This was Montevideo, 1959, right after Castro had taken power. He was running all over the hemisphere, doing all that. And that was my portfolio.

*Q: What was the situation, basically politically, in Uruguay in this period of time?*

HART: Well, you had just had an historic electoral victory by the Blanco Party, which was the more conservative of the two parties in Uruguay—the Colorados and the Blancos, longtime...

*Q: Backwards and forwards.*

HART: Yes, back and forth. But the Colorados had held power for...I've forgotten, 30 years or something like that, before this victory by the Blancos. Now Uruguay had a bicameral legislature, didn't they? Was it bicameral or unicameral? I think it was a bicameral legislature. But instead of an executive, they had an executive council. They had about seven or nine people on it, and these were proportionally represented people who went on the council. The Blancos won control of the council, and also, I believe, had control of the parliament, for the first time in a long time. The presidency of the council was

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not for one person. The president of the council was elected by the council itself, and he held office, I believe, for two years, and then it switched and somebody else held it for two years, and the elections were held every four years.

Uruguay, of course, had a reputation of being the Switzerland of Latin America, because it was a democratic country. It was a nonviolent country. It had advanced social programs, et cetera, et cetera.

I don't think Washington cared one way or another whether the Blancos or the Colorados were in Uruguay, because it was going to work closely with either one. We had a really warm and fuzzy relationship with Uruguay, compared to, say, Argentina or Brazil or Paraguay or what have you, over the years, I think partially because we shared a lot of values. I think, over time, you have the best foreign relations with countries with whom you share values. Just like on an individual basis, you have better relations with people with whom you share values. Some exceptions, but a valid general rule.

Uruguay at that time, however, was suffering from a common Latin American dilemma: and that is, they'd built up a group of entitlement programs that the treasury couldn't finance. And so they'd go through one economic crisis after another: rampant inflation and then tightening down under the demands of the IMF to get a stabilization program in, blah, blah, blah. They were going through the stop-go, wringing-out policies that became kind of the bogey man in Latin America, for the leftist circle, as the way that imperialism extracted its pound of flesh from the poor and downtrodden.

Uruguay, being a democratic country, was a wonderful place for a neophyte political officer to operate, because you had street rallies by the Communists, and you had the universities free and active in the traditional Spanish sense of the universities being, in a way, the conscience of the country, et cetera. And so I was out in the street probably two nights a week to something or the other. It didn't make my bride very happy, but that was fine. And I became recognizable on sight...to the Cubans and the Communists and

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the Socialists who were around and picked up that I was taking a class at the university and that I was hanging around a lot. It eventually got to the point where my family and I were receiving death threats. And the funny thing about it is, I don't believe I ever even told anybody in the embassy (contrast that to today), because I never took it seriously.

*Q: Well, it wasn't a time when things were happening, was it?*

HART: Oh, yeah, things were happening. Things were happening. But when somebody would buzz the intercom in my apartment house and say, in Spanish, to my wife, "You and your family are going to die," or something like that, and I came home and she told me about it, I just said, "You know, that's just an attempt to try to scare us." I believe at that time in the embassies the admin. officer was the security officer, and I didn't have very much respect for the admin. officer, so the last person I was going to go to and complain about this was him. So I ignored it.

The embassy itself was probably the highest-caliber group of Foreign Service officers that I ever happened to work with.

The ambassador was a man who, if you were going to draw up the kind of qualifications and values that I think you should have in an American ambassador, would serve as a good model, a guy by the name of Bob Woodward.

*Q: Yes, I've done some extensive interviewing with him.*

HART: Bob Woodward is a thoroughly, thoroughly decent, dedicated man, who was selfless in his dedication to advancing the foreign-policy interests of the United States, not in a mindless way, but in a very thoughtful way.

His number two, the DCM, was a guy by the name of Hank Hoyt, who had a congenital heart problem that everybody knew about. The doctors told him, "Hank, if you don't take it easy, you're going to probably kill yourself."

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And Hank said, "I'm not going to compromise on this. I'm going to live my life the way I want to live it."

He did, and about five years later he keeled over one day of a heart attack and died in his early fifties while he was ambassador to Uruguay.

After a year, I asked for a transfer from the Political Section to the Economic Section, even though I had the best portfolio in the embassy. And the reason I asked for a transfer was I decided that economics was where the real action was, not politics, not the Political Section. Oh, you'd get wonderful end-user reports, you know, that little piece of political analysis you've done on whatever you've dug up about the Socialist Party in Uruguay, or whatever, or what the Cubans were doing. But I became convinced that I really would get more satisfaction out of working on the economic side.

The head of the Economic Section was a Department of Commerce political appointee by the name of George Landau.

*Q: Oh, yes. Again, we've done an oral history with him, too.*

HART: It was a three-man section, and the other officer was a guy who came into the Economic Section about the same time that I transferred from the Political Section to the Economic Section. He came from Brazil, I believe it was, and his name was Dick Bloomfield. So Dick and George and I were the Economic Section in Montevideo in 1960-61. Three more different personalities you couldn't find anywhere, but it was probably the best section I ever worked in, in terms of knowing what they were doing and doing it well. With Bob Woodward as the ambassador, and Hank Hoyt as the DCM, you had superb leadership at the top.

Now I remember at the time, Stu, as we sat around and had a beer and what have you, I used to say, "You know, it really bothers me that the caliber of people in the Foreign Service is not better," because some of the people in the political sections and admin. and

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consular work and what have you, I thought, were not up to what a Foreign Service officer ought to be. Little did I know, little did I know...

Now I've failed to mention one important player in all of this—the station chief.

*Q: I was going to ask that question.*

HART: The station chief was a gentleman, who forever faded into obscurity, named E. Howard Hunt.

*Q: I refer any future historian to the Watergate affair, but would you tell how Howard Hunt operated at that time.*

HART: If you've read Harlot's Ghost, the big novel-to-be-continued by Norman Mailer that has recently come out, it got Howard about right. Howard, again, is a unique character; as far as I could tell, totally self-absorbed, totally amoral, and a danger to himself and anybody around him. As far as I could tell, Howard went from one disaster to another, rising higher and higher, everything floating just right behind him, until he hit Watergate, and then it exploded on him. Now that may be unfair to Howard. You can get different interpretations of his contribution, if you want to call it that, in the Jacobo Arbenz thing in Guatemala in '54. But Howard made his name in Guatemala in '54.

My wife, the classmate at Fletcher, had gone to work for the CIA right out of Fletcher, when I had come to Washington and gone into the Foreign Service and we got married some six months later, had been told that she could go to work for the station in Montevideo after she got there. Howard had said yes, we want you to come to work for us, and then, at the last minute, she was told no, you can't do that because State Department policy doesn't allow it. Whether that was true or not I don't really know, but it seemed to me that it made some sense, because if indeed my wife worked in the station and she was identified as somebody who worked in the station, then...



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*Q: You'd be forever tainted.*

HART: I can understand why the State Department maybe wouldn't want to do that.

But the only man in the world I ever knew who Robert Woodward couldn't get along with was Howard Hunt. And it used to be a constant source of gossip and amusement and conversation about the latest contretemps between Howard doing something that would drive any, any reasonable person off the edge of the Earth and Robert Woodward's reaction to it.

And this is not in Harlot's Ghost... At one point, Eisenhower came to visit Uruguay on a swing through Latin America in January or February of '60. They brought in a couple of helicopters to transport him around Uruguay during his brief visit there. And Howard, without checking with the ambassador, promised one of these million-dollar helicopters to Benito Nardone, who was the head of the National Council of Government at that time and a big crony of Howard Hunt. That caused a few moments of crisis when the ambassador found out about it. But I'll let Bob Woodward and Howard Hunt tell that story.

*Q: But did you see the reaction? In my interview with Bob Woodward, he said that he'd been in Central America before...*

HART: He'd been ambassador in Costa Rica.

*Q: And seen the aftermath of the Arbenz business and all this, and made the point that he thought the United States, by getting involved in these covert actions of trying to unseat people rather than doing normal spying, wasted a tremendous moral advantage of the United States, and felt that if you added them all up you'd find that it came out as a very decided minus as far as advancing the cause of the United States. Did you sort of get this flavor while you were there?*

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HART: I don't recall that I ever heard Bob Woodward discuss this; however, I totally agree with his judgment. And if you want to look at the history of the CIA that I'm aware of in the 27 years that I was around them, I would say it's a net minus, a net minus. That's not to say you can't find some things that were done in covert action... I'm not talking about intelligence gathering, I'm talking about covert action. I never knew a covert action program (and I've approved a fair number of them) that I really thought was worth a candle. Even on the collection of information, if it's not usable, it doesn't reduce the value of it to nothing, but it greatly reduces the value of it. I don't think the security of the United States would have been greatly damaged in any way if the CIA had never been born, to tell you the truth. The intelligence-gathering function would have been performed somewhere else, not necessarily by more competent people, but by people more susceptible to political control.

*Q: We'll probably come back to this later on in other aspects. You mentioned that in Montevideo you'd go out into the crowds and all, but how does a young political officer operate in a situation like this?*

HART: It was kind of funny. I think pretty much you write your own scenario. Nobody ever took me aside. I had a section chief, who was a Wristonee and had not had a happy time in the Foreign Service and hadn't had a lot of overseas experience, who had his own agenda, and it was not the agenda that I certainly was interested in. He was very good at some things and terrible at others. But he by and large gave me a free rein. In the morning we would read five or six newspapers (which was all there were in Uruguay), and I'd see something in one of the newspapers that looked interesting, and at the morning staff meeting I would say, "I think I'm going to look into this." And I don't recall ever having anybody say, "No, don't look into that." Occasionally, they would say, "Well, look into something else first." But essentially it was on-the-job self-training.

And I would just say, "Okay, you want me to do something about University Affairs, well maybe it would help if I enrolled in a class at the university." So I went out there, and I

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heard that there was a young man who was a teacher, a Ph.D. economist from Harvard, who was bright and looked like he was a comer in the Uruguayan political scene, and maybe he would be a good person to take an economics course with. So I enrolled in the course given by a guy in the university who happened to be named Enrique Iglesias, who over the years has held every important government post in Uruguay except president: foreign minister, finance minister, head of the Central Bank, and now head of the Inter-American Development Bank. Enrique and I became good friends and have continued all these years. Nobody told me to do that; I just did it.

As to what happened out of that, I'd write these things up and say, "Something interesting happened at a meeting last night at the university. Carlos Lechuga, the commandant from Cuba, was here, and they had a student rally in the auditorium, and this is what Lechuga said..." I'd report it, and about the only thing that happened in terms of supervision was that my boss would edit it, not for content but for style. He saw that as his job.

I don't know whether I was any good at this or not. The ambassador and the DCM seemed more pleased than my boss did. Interestingly enough, when I got, I guess, my only efficiency report out of the fellow who was the section chief, Jack Ohmans, who's now dead, it was really a rather negative efficiency report. And when it hit the DCM's desk for review, he put a "Major dissent" on it, and then the ambassador tacked on another "Major dissent," which in the end, of course, is the best of all possible worlds; it gets people's attention.

So, really, you invented yourself.

*Q: Was it apparent to you that the situation with the Tupamaros was going serious?*

HART: Yes. Yes, it was, because of the history of alienation, not in the lower classes, essentially in the middle and upper-middle classes in Uruguayan society, particularly in the university area. These extremists were present and active in the university, and that's where the Tupamaros mainly recruited their people. There weren't many working-

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class stiffs in the Tupamaros. These people were there and active, although they had not entered their armed-insurrection phase when I was there, and they were identified closely with Castro. Now at that time, I think they still believed they had a chance to win political ascendancy in Uruguay in some way other than through armed revolt.

The Tupamaros started engaging in terrorist activities, major terrorist activities. I left Uruguay in '61; it must have been about '63 when the real violence—the kidnappings and the murders and everything—began. There was a lot of that going on, but at a lower level.

In Harlot's Ghost, there are descriptions of what the CIA was doing with street gangs and rival groups in the university and what have you. That is accurate; that was true. Because of my work on the overt side with some of the same groups, some... who were friends of mine and about the same age who were working on the covert side, I had an idea of what they were doing, and vice versa. That description in Harlot's Ghost is, again, very accurate, and Mailer got it about right.

*Q: How about on the economic side? In the first place, were we very concerned? Were we saying watch this?*

HART: Oh, we and the IMF were hand in glove in trying to lead Uruguay away from the folly of statism and a fairly advanced form of Socialism. Since the government was the main employer in Uruguay, it was your traditional top-down Latin American kind of governmental organization.

Now Uruguay, of course, at that time had about two million people. A million of them were in Montevideo, so you've got Montevideo, and then the rest. And out there was a bunch of cattle runs, mainly; they raised cattle and sheep. Meat and wool was what the country lived on, and they taxed that to support this huge urban complex in Montevideo. But the wealth was produced out in the countryside on the ranches. And the system simply could not pay for the amount of money that was required to support this.

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People were entitled to benefits they didn't get. The labor laws were so advanced it was impossible to get a day's work out of anybody. The unemployment, the social security, the retirement benefits, the medical benefits, et cetera, et cetera, were all enacted and everybody was entitled to it. And the government strove mightily to deliver at least a minimum level of services. But the money wasn't there. And the only thing that kept the crisis from crashing down (which it finally did in the Sixties and Seventies) earlier was every once in a while a war would come along and rescue them. Uruguay was on the verge of some kind of revolution when World War II came along and high meat and wool prices rescued them. And then they lived off of that until the Korean War came along and replenished the treasury. But by the time I got there, in '59...

*Q: There was no war.*

HART: Subliminally, they used to pray for another nice little Korean-type war until they could get the prices of wool back up.

*Q: How did you find economic reporting? You said you wanted to get into it because you felt here was kind of the action, but how did you feel about what you were doing?*

HART: Oh, I really liked it. George Landau was not an economist. He had been a businessman, and his theoretical economics were not very strong. Over the years, George, because he's a smart guy, picked it up on the job, but at that time he was pretty new to it. And Dick and I—Dick, having just come out of a year of mid-career training at Harvard; and I, not having any particular expertise but kind of a natural interest in economics—did the analytical work. George did a lot of the other stuff, and he was commercial attach# also, because he was a Department of Commerce person, soon integrated into the State Department, soon to become a fast-rising FSO. He spent a lot of his time with Bob Woodward both in Uruguay and then later on in Spain.

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But the economic reporting? I would say I got more supervision out of George than I ever did out of the Political Section guy, Jack Ohmans. George doesn't let too many sparrows fall without knowing what's going on. But I never had George challenge any of the content of what we did.

Dick did the domestic financial reporting: Central Bank, statistics, credit, economic policies, internal budget process, what have you. And I did foreign trade, particularly meat and wool. So I had to learn about meat and wool. That was my initiation to commodities, an initiation which went on for the next 30 years. I left Mississippi to get away from farms, but I never made it.

*Q: You left Montevideo in 1961. How'd you feel about the Foreign Service at that time?*

HART: I was still excited and pleased. I left Montevideo at the end of a two-year tour, having served in the Political Section and the Economic Section, having experienced some rubbing against some really first-rate officers. My first child was born there.

Bob Woodward had been appointed ambassador to Chile shortly before I was due to leave. In a burst of creative wisdom, I had been assigned to the IES Office in San Francisco, and my job would have been going to the airport and meeting and greeting and escorting various types of middle-level and occasional high-level visitors in and out of San Francisco—being a tour guide and administrative assistant to visitors. And when I told Bob Woodward that I didn't think I really wanted to do that, he said, "Well, would you like to go to Chile with me?" It sounded good to me, and he said, "Well, I'll put you in the Economic Section in Santiago." He checked around on it, and it turned out there was no vacancy in the Economic Section coming up in Santiago. So then he said to me, "How would you feel about being the consul in Antofagasta?" Well, shoot, I didn't know Antofagasta from nowhere, but it still looked better than going to IES San Francisco. He said, "I'll move you down to Santiago as soon as there's a vacancy down there. You can be consul in Antofagasta until then."

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And I said, "Okay."

Bob Woodward came back to Washington on business and had gotten that assignment cleared through the personnel system until it got to the last door, where he had to have it, and they said, "We're very sorry, Ambassador Woodward, but you can't do this."

"Why not?" he said.

And they said, "Because he's not going to IES San Francisco. He's going to Indonesian language training."

And Bob Woodward said, "That's not what I was told before."

And they said, "Well, it's just happened. And you can't break that because he has requested Indonesian language training."

You know when you filled out your wish list, you had to list so many languages, hard and not-hard languages. Well, when I was filling out that thing I was taking Spanish at FSI, and we went in to get coffee. I am not a language whiz; I think I scored 62 on my language aptitude test. I said to somebody, "Which is the easiest of the hard languages?"

And somebody said, "Indonesian."

So when it came time to fill out that slot, I filled in Indonesian.

And sure enough, Bob Woodward could not break that assignment. I went to Indonesian language training at FSI. And guess who went as consul to Antofagasta?

Q: *Who?*

HART: Tom Boyatt.

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*Q: Oh, my goodness.*

HART: And that's where he became friendly with a major in the Chilean army named Augusto Pinochet, who was in some function there in the Antofagasta military district, in 1961 or '62.

The big wheel turns.

*Q: Oh, yes. You then went out to Djakarta in 1962. The language training was about how long?*

HART: It was ten months at the time. Ten months of language and area training. The head of the area training for Southeast Asia at that time was this wonderful old man, a former missionary and the son of missionary parents, who was married to Margaret Landon, the woman who wrote *Anna and the King of Siam*. I took ten months of Indonesian. My wife took intensive Indonesian training for about three or four months, so that she had some capacity. I think they have now reduced Indonesian to five or six months. I don't know whether that speaks well for today's students, or what.

*Q: You served in Indonesia from '62 to '64. What was the situation in Indonesia when you got there?*

HART: It was bad. Of course, Sukarno at that time was one of the major leaders in the nonaligned movement. Indonesia had been in a terrible economic decline over a period of years, primarily due to the mismanagement of Sukarno and the people around him. Indonesia at that time was about as poor as all but a half-dozen countries in the world, Bangladesh and that part of the Indian subcontinent being poorer; Haiti, perhaps, being poorer; and you might find a couple of African countries that were poorer. And the prospects were just abysmal for economic development. What wherewithal Sukarno could



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muster went into show projects, went into military armament. He was up to his ears in hock to the Soviet Union for military hardware, including a cruiser.

*Q: It just rusted, didn't it?*

HART: Yeah, whatever. It was not the Aurora, but it was of similar vintage.

*Q: The Aurora being from the Russian Revolution.*

HART: Yeah, it was in St. Petersburg, wasn't it?

Anyway, Indonesia to me was through the looking glass. If at that time you wanted to find a country where the values, behavior patterns, politics, and institutions were antithetical to those that a middle-class American held, Indonesia was a good place to look. I mean, they were totally different.

One of the things that intrigued me about the Foreign Service, I said, "Look, I'm going to join the Foreign Service, and I'm going to learn languages, and I'm going to study cultures, and I'm going to study political systems, economic systems, people. And in the end, I'm going to be able to turn a switch in my head (right here on the side, right where the electrode protrudes) and I'm going to be able to think like an Indonesian (or whatever) one moment, and then I can turn the switch back and I can write to Washington and think like an American while still being able to think like an Indonesian. Won't I be clever? Won't I be enlightening to all these people who don't have this wonderful facility?"

And I learned in Indonesia that I certainly couldn't do that. And I'm not sure anybody can.

*Q: I think you're right.*

HART: I'm not sure anybody can, because I think you're either on one side of the line or the other, and once you cross the line (they used to call it "going native"), you lose your credibility.

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Now the Indonesian political situation was a mess, because you had so-called Guided Democracy, which was a form of totalitarian rule in keeping with the traditions of Java. I mean, they had never had democratic rule in Java. And the parliament and the presidency and the vice presidency and the cabinet system and all this were merely little overlays, papier-mâché facades for age-old, traditional, essentially autocratic rule that the Javanese, which make up the vast bulk of the population and certainly the politically important population of Indonesia, that's what they did. So Sukarno was kind of a god-king.

The U.S. relationships with Indonesia were troubled. We were just beginning to get really deeply involved in Vietnam. Sukarno was closely allied with the Soviets and was mending his fences with the Chinese Communists, fences that had gotten broken down at one time or another because the overseas Chinese men controlled the economy, and Sukarno had bashed them, on more than one occasion. He was trying to transfer that economic control over to the Indonesians and get it out of the hands of the Chinese. The Indonesian Communist Party was the largest Communist Party outside the Soviet Union at that time, even larger than the Communist Party in China, I think—not because there were more Communists, but because I think they had the doors open wider.

And Indonesian culture is such a strange culture for a Westerner. It is, as I said, through the looking glass. I think the basic difference, where we start, is that we are raised with the idea that the individual is the central focus of society. Their starting point is that the larger society is the central point, and the individual has very little role to play, as an individual, in that makeup. And you can understand why, if you come from a country where there's a lot of land and a few people, such as the American tradition, rugged individualism makes some sense. When you're sitting on an island the size of Connecticut that's about to sink under the weight, even then, of nearly a hundred million people, with a net birthrate increase every year of about four percent, then society's going to organize itself differently, and values are going to reflect the fact that not everybody can lie down at once on the

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Island of Java. Somebody's got to be standing up; there's not enough room for everybody to lie down—metaphorically speaking. It's a hotbed country.

When I got there, I was one of the two or three language officers in the embassy. And I was delighted to be in the Economic Section; that's where I wanted to be.

Living was not easy for an embassy family, because it was an unhealthful place and the housing was not very good. It was hard just to maintain a standard of living of the type that you thought that you deserved as an American, even with the help of the commissary and the services of embassy people. My wife, I think, maybe liked it better than I did.

And the reason that I never really liked serving in Indonesia was because I thought that American policy in Indonesia was totally wrong. And I felt that the American ambassador to Indonesia at that time, a gentleman by the name of Howard Palfrey Jones, was as wrongheaded and as misguided as any man I'd ever met on the Earth.

*Q: This was a reputation which apparently he had, even while he was there, with many people.*

HART: This man was cuckoo. He was not certifiable, but he was cuckoo.

*Q: Could you talk about him, sort of his background and how you saw him, and anything that you were picking up about him before you came out (because he was there a long time and he was very, very influential), and maybe where his power lay.*

HART: No problem. Now you'll have to start out realizing that I was an FSO Seven when I arrived in Indonesia, and got promoted to Six right after I arrived, so I was still a pretty junior person. I got promoted to Five the following year (again, probably through administrative error), so that kind of got me into the middle grades. So my perspective was not from the catbird seat; my perspective was very much from below. But I'll tell you what I know and what I think about Howard Jones, subject to other people's opinion.

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The major influence in Howard Jones's life that shaped his views was a Christian Scientist. As such, his approach to Indonesia was (and I've heard him say this), "If you see something wrong in Indonesia, it's really not because Sukarno is a bad person or because they're behaving badly, it's because you're not looking at it right."

This is an example of what I'm talking about. Whenever Sukarno was going to make a speech, he summoned all the ambassadors, and they would have to sit in front and listen. Although Howard Jones spent something like eight years in Indonesia, he never learned the simplest Indonesian sentences. He knew a few Indonesian words, but he could not speak Indonesian nor understand it. He would sit in public meetings where Sukarno's main theme would be lambasting the United States as an imperialist country that was doing all kinds of bad things to the nonaligned and to the poor and what have you, while maybe praising the Soviet Union, maybe praising other members of the nonaligned group. Howard Jones would refuse to take an interpreter along with him, and at the end of this skinning of the United States, he would sit there and applaud. He didn't even know what he'd heard.

Now maybe we had somebody listening to the speech on the radio, and when Howard Jones would get back to the embassy, they would tell him what Sukarno had said in the speech, and draft a cable saying, "Today Sukarno said that the United States is the devil incarnate and is responsible for everything that's ever gone bad in the world back to Adam and Eve."

Howard Jones would hold that cable up. He would then arrange to have breakfast with Sukarno at the palace the next morning. And he would come back and he would write a cable saying, "As I was sitting on the veranda having breakfast this morning with the president, he told me, 'Don't pay any attention to that stuff in that speech yesterday. That was all window dressing for this, that, and the other thing.' He doesn't believe a word of it, and we shouldn't believe a word of it. And for heavens' sake, of course he wants us to

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continue the hundred million dollars a year in U.S. aid that we're giving him. And of course he's really our friend and will work behind the scenes for mutually agreed goals."

And so that would be sent in a "NODIS." cable to Washington and would be read by Averell Harriman, who at that time was the assistant secretary of state for the Far East.

The report of the speech might be read by the desk officer, or maybe by the country director, since they had just put in the country-director program at that time, although they were not as powerful as they later on became.

So Howard knew how, through "NODIS" and "EXDIS." cables, to get to the people who mattered, and to tell them, "Sukarno is not our problem. Our problem is the Communists. Sukarno is a very skillful man at manipulating and controlling the Communists, and all this anti-American stuff out there that's going on is just a smoke screen that he uses while he's doing that. He's really a very good friend of ours. And he's really a very good person for the people of Indonesia to have as their leader. However, Washington, there's only one person on this green Earth who can deal with him the way that it needs to be, and that is I, in all modesty, Howard Palfrey Jones. Therefore, U.S. policy in Indonesia is the right policy, to appease and maintain and support Sukarno. And I'm the guy for the job."

This stuff went in mainly "EXDIS", "NODIS.", into the highest levels of the Department and the White House, while the embassy was churning out tons of stuff saying, "Sukarno is the worst news that ever came down the road, for Indonesia and for U.S. policy and for this neighborhood, Southeast Asia. This guy is bad and he's dangerous."

*Q: Even I, although I was sitting most of this time in Yugoslavia, was getting the rumblings within the Foreign Service network about Howard Jones and his problems. But there are two things that I don't quite understand. You can send these cables in, but obviously, people within the system are talking to the upper people. Where was Howard Jones getting his support? I mean, the cables aren't necessarily the be all and end all.*

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HART: Well, you see, since these were “EXDIS” and “NODIS” cables, only a very few people in the embassy ever saw them, so they didn't really know what was going on back in Washington. In Washington, not that many people saw these things, at the working level. Restrictions on the distribution were a good deal tighter on “EXDIS” and “NODIS” than they were later on. Furthermore, and I think this is the key to it, Stu, Howard Jones was telling Washington what it wanted to hear at a time when Vietnam was becoming the central issue for U.S. foreign policy in Asia. You know and I know that, institutionally, the State Department is incapable of dealing with more than one crisis in an area at a time. Howard Jones was saying, “We don't have a problem in Indonesia. Not really. I'm taking care of that, if you just leave me alone. So you, Averell Harriman and Roger Hilsman and Walt Rostow and everybody else back there, can concentrate on Vietnam, if that's what you're inclined to do.” And that sold.

Now what was Howard Jones's background? He was by training a journalist, a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism. Spent some years as a journalist. Eventually got over into AID. Spent some years on Taiwan, working for AID. And then, through political influence, got appointed into the Foreign Service. And either his first or second job, I can't remember which, was as ambassador to Indonesia.

*Q: Did you get any feel for how he survived the transition from the Eisenhower administration to the Kennedy administration?*

HART: I can't remember the exact date of his arrival in Indonesia, but he must have arrived there in the Eisenhower administration.

*Q: Yes, he went out in '58 and left in '64.*

HART: Since he was a career Foreign Service officer, that issue didn't arise, and he was able to convince the Kennedy crowd that he really had a handle on things. Now he got

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in very close with the Kennedy family. During my time in Indonesia, Bobby Kennedy and Sarge Shriver both came out to Indonesia. Both were totally bastards. Totally bastards.

*Q: Would you talk about that, because it's played up, you know, Bobby Kennedy coming out and all. I've always had great reservations about the gentleman. With Sargent Shriver, how did that go?*

HART: Well, I did not work directly on the visit, so what I'm telling you is what conventional wisdom was in the embassy, by those who did work on the visit. I was off in the Economic Section; I didn't do political things.

Bobby Kennedy came out there essentially to tell Sukarno to behave. And in the end, when it really got down to hard cheese, he flinched, he blinked, because he would not tell Sukarno that if he attacked Malaysia, the United States would back Malaysia. He would not tell him that. And maybe it would have happened as in the Saddam Hussein case that we discussed off record earlier, maybe Sukarno would have instituted confrontations, with low-level warfare, against Malaysia anyway. But certainly, to the extent that we had U.S. influence to prevent it, we didn't use it. Bobby Kennedy flinched. And I think he flinched in part because of Vietnam. That was the preoccupation of everybody in the administration: Vietnam. It was not a good show. We did not come out of that looking like an honorable country.

*Q: Well, the folk wisdom was that Bobby Kennedy went out and talked to students and made a great success of this thing. But this was not how the embassy saw it?*

HART: That's not the way I remember it.

*Q: You're rolling your eyes.*

HART: Well, I never felt that ambassadors and people who went out and claimed to have established wonderful relationships with the common people were necessarily advancing

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the foreign-policy interests of the United States. It may be great photo-op. stuff, it may look real good back on the hustings in the United States, but if you go out and talk to the average Indonesian student, who was imbued with a sense of power and authority flowing from above, on almost a religious basis, down toward the bottom, you're really not engaging in constructive political dialogue. First of all, the person that you're talking with is powerless, or was, in that society. Second, the man to talk to, the man to talk tough to, the man to talk straightforward to, only had one address, and that was: the presidential palace.

I don't want this to sound like I'm a total elitist, because I think that a lot of the work I've done over the years was maintaining contacts with the outs in certain situations. And I don't want to sound like I think that the only place that you do business as a diplomat is with those who happen to be in power at the time.

*Q: But there are societies where...*

HART: There are societies where having the attorney general of the United States wade out into a rice paddy and tell a rice farmer, who's terrified of everything going on around him, what a wonderful fellow he is doesn't advance the foreign policy of the United States. There was John Kenneth Galbraith, who was so full of shit, who went off to India with this same mindset: he was going to get down with the people. So what does he do? He gets these photo ops. He wades out in rice paddies, comes down with hepatitis, and damn near dies, and can't even operate for the next year because he's got hepatitis.

As I say, that runs the danger of sounding elitist, but that's not what I mean. I believe there comes a time and there comes a level in the embassy where these things need to be done. But not by the attorney general of the United States on a two-day visit, which is what we had with Bobby Kennedy, or a three-day visit; whatever it was, it was a disaster.

Sarge Shriver was a disaster. He came out and bribed the Indonesian government to accept the Peace Corps. Bad news. You should never bribe anybody to accept the Peace Corps. They should come to you and ask for it. Any AID projects that you have to push,



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over the objections of the recipient government, are almost surely doomed to fail. Only those projects where you get the full support and the desire by the government to make them work have any kind of chance. We may know better, but we can't make it work better if we're in their backyard. You've got to have a viable, willing partner in any of these activities where you're operating in somebody else's backyard.

Bobby Kennedy and the Kennedy family I don't think ever understood the basic difference between domestic politics in the United States and foreign affairs. And this is understandable, because we know what we know. They really looked at the world, at least in the early days of the Kennedy administration, as an extension of U.S. domestic politics. And foreign policy was just another kind of domestic politics, carried on in another place. Probably there was some learning that went on over time, but I think what I said is an accurate description of the early days.

Howard Jones was great. You see, these visitors would come, and he would grab them, and he was a big talker and a terrific raconteur, and he was an effective guy in convincing people that he had some answers. And so they left him forever and ever and ever. It's almost ironic that he left the post very shortly before the coup occurred. He left in '65, and the coup happened within a couple of months or so.

*Q: When Marshall Green had just arrived.*

HART: That's right, Marshall Green had just arrived. It's almost ironic that that happened.

Now all of this was building in Indonesia. The pressure inside the cooker was going up, and everybody could read the numbers on the pressure gauge. You didn't know whether the gauge was exactly accurate, but you knew that something was going to happen in Indonesia. And if you look at Indonesian history, on almost a predictable level, you have repressions and explosions, repressions and explosions. And the explosions take different forms; they're not always the same kind. But the explosion of '65 combined all the blood and worst traits—it was a Krakatau-type explosion. With a nation, the main part of which

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is Java, that's as tightly controlled, as tightly constrained as Indonesia is, these pressures build up.

Resentments come from every point on the compass. Maybe in a village, for example there may be somebody that has done your sister wrong. It may be that somebody else has stolen a chicken from you. It may that you have a little land border dispute with somebody else. It may be politics. It may be any number of things.

But within Indonesian society these things are by and large repressed and sublimated in the interest of harmony within the group...until something happens. Something says all bets are off, and the night of the big knife occurs.

And it usually occurs, in Indonesia, if you go back in this century, in periods of 10 to 15 years. Now in the Suharto era, you haven't had these things. I don't know what that indicates, but you haven't. But if you go back in Dutch colonial history in Indonesia, et cetera, et cetera, you'll see these outbursts. Sometimes they'll be directed, say, against the overseas Chinese. Sometimes they'll be directed against a religious group. Sometimes they'll be directed against a political group.

But in '65, when the PKI, the Communist Party of Indonesia, decided that it was strong enough and it had Sukarno well enough in hand to try to grab for power, they came within a whisker of succeeding. Within a whisker. And if the people who had gone to kill General Nasution, chief of staff of the armed forces in Indonesia at that time, had succeeded, there's a real possibility that there would have been a Communist takeover in Indonesia.

But they didn't succeed; Nasution jumped out a back window. His wife and daughter, I believe, were massacred in the house. He jumped out a back window and made his way to a military outpost, where he rallied the anti-Communist generals who had survived the coup. Some 13 or more generals were killed, as I recall. [EB says 6.] And of course, the main man, because he controlled the garrisoned troops in the Djakarta area, was Suharto.

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He was a major general and the main man, as I recall. And Nasution relied on Suharto for the troop strength to do what had to be done to defeat the PKI.

When you had that attempt and it failed, you had a bloodbath in Indonesia which nobody's ever been able to really accurately measure. All you know is that it was enormous.

But most of them weren't even political scores. Most of the people killed in that aftermath almost certainly were killed for other than political reasons. All the scores that had been repressed, all the grievances that had been sublimated in this tightly wound society for the previous 15 or 20 years, and there were plenty, got squared up.

*Q: Well, I was just thinking, the one Indonesian word, I guess, that's entered our language is amok, to run amok. That's Indonesian, isn't it? [Webster's says Malay.]*

HART: Well, there are a few others, but amok is one. It's an Indonesian-Malay word, and what it really is describing...I'm starting to sound like I'm a dealer in sociological jargon and everything, and I'm really expounding here about things I have no credentials on at all. But I've thought about this and tried to be a student of human behavior, so that I have a better understanding. If you repress things enough, when there finally is a release from the constraints that are repressing those things, you don't get measured behavior, you get violent behavior. And that's the reason, in repressive societies, that you have this syndrome, this occurrence, of running amok.

*Q: Well, going back now to the time you were there. You left before this thing blew up.*

HART: I was there from '62-'64.

*Q: But now how was it working in an embassy where, from what I gather, those officers who were involved in political/economic affairs really felt very strongly one way, and they thought that their ambassador, in the nice way, was a boob; in the second way, was...*

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HART: Was a danger.

Q: *Was a danger.*

HART: That's right, a menace.

Q: *What did you do? Did you sit around and write letters back to Washington?*

HART: It was miserable. What you did was try to find clever little ways...it was like writing literature in the late days of the Czarist regime. You tried to find subtle little ways to get people's attention back in Washington, saying, "The ambassador is a dumb ass hole. Don't pay any attention to him. Listen to what we have to say." Now visitors from Washington would come out there and they would hear these things, but nobody wanted to take on Howard Jones. I mean, the Foreign Service is not renowned for its reputation as being composed of heroic bureaucrats. Most people go along and get along. And how many times have you heard, "Well, the ambassador knows a lot of things that we don't know. He's wired in ways and he has insights that we don't have. He's the only ambassador we have." Just like, "He's the only president we have." The deference to authority, the deference to rank, is an excuse that some people use. Other people don't really give a big, happy fuck. There are all kinds of reasons. But there usually is a core of half a dozen or more people who feel strongly about these things and try to rattle the cages. There were some like that in Indonesia, in the embassy.

I had a lot of contacts in the press there. My main beat in the Economic Section was keeping track of Soviet-bloc aid to Indonesia. I used to travel all over the islands, looking at cement plants that didn't produce cement, and steel plants that didn't produce steel, and all these other awful botchings the Soviets had. The Chinese and everybody had bad projects. We had bad projects.

In World War II, Churchill said, "If you will give us the tools, we will finish the job." In Indonesia, in the aid business, they said, "If you will give us the job, we will finish the

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tools.” And you'd see these bulldozers and earth movers and everything out in the middle of stalled projects.

Anyway, my beat was Soviet aid projects. And American press people were interested in what the Soviets were doing in Indonesia, so a lot of them used to come and talk to me. It got so bad, say, in early '64, that finally this guy came to me and said, “What is all this rumbling I hear about differences between the American ambassador and people on the staff? Tell me all about Howard Jones.”

And I said, “You want to know about Howard Jones, you can find out about Howard Jones. He's a public figure; you don't need me to tell you about him. But if you want to know about views of the Indonesian role in world affairs and different viewpoints, I'll describe what the two opposing viewpoints are. One viewpoint is that Sukarno is good for Indonesia, he's good for the world, and that U.S. policy should support him. The other view is that just the reverse is true. Some people in the embassy hold one view, and some people in the embassy hold the other.”

And he said, “Well, which do you hold?”

And I said, “That's not relevant. If you want to find out what's really going on here, you don't have to ask me. There's a guy over in the British Embassy, go ask him.”

Anyway, the guy got his story. He was a UPI reporter. He wired the story in to the New York office, and it was replayed on the UPI file into the Far East. And it was a story saying, “Howard Jones is a disaster. That dumb yo-yo says this and that and the other thing.” And there were lots of particulars. They were in the public domain in Djakarta. And certain embassy officers broke into sweats. And because of the international date line, it got there before it was released to the States.

When it hit, Howard Jones picked up the phone, called a Columbia School of Journalism classmate of his, who was the head of UPI, and killed the story before it released in the

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United States and Europe. Because of the time difference, the story was delayed, and UPI withdrew the story.

Then the hunt went on in the embassy for who fed this guy part of the information that the story was based on. Suspicion centered on a guy in the Political Section by the name of Frank Bennett. I remember Frank Bennett sweating bullets for days, and Howard Jones either called him up on the carpet or had the DCM call him up on the carpet, and quizzed him about whom he'd had contact with and all this stuff. It was a full-scale investigation about who had done-in the ambassador. I think Frank bore some scars from that. He really wasn't the one. He really wasn't the one. I never wrote the story for the guy who came to see me, but I pointed him in the right direction.

But I think, looking at the broader perspective, Stu, it was that experience (maybe it started earlier than that) which led me to the way I decided to deal with the press.

I never knowingly ever lied about anything having to do with my job. I would certainly never lie to the public about anything. I never knowingly lied to the press about anything. I decided to be as open as I could, given security constraints, and maybe sometime even going on the other side of the line, on what was really happening, with the idea that if it won't bear public scrutiny, over the long run it won't work, because sooner or later almost everything has to be able to bear public scrutiny.

So, over the years, I was always a big risk taker with the press, and really was lucky in that I never got badly burned by it. Never did get badly burned by it.

And the way I frequently would do it was when I would disagree with policy, I would merely say, "U.S. policy is the following..." and spell out what it was and why it was; "A contrary view is the following..." and what it was and why it was, then let the listener decide which makes more sense. And I always felt that was not a disloyal act. I thought it was an act which was within the ethics I could live with as a Foreign Service officer in a disciplined

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service. It's a fine line to walk. Some people would not be comfortable with it. But that was how I dealt with it.

*Q: Well, I take it this was not a happy ship.*

HART: It was a terrible ship, and I couldn't wait to get out of there. God, I was going crazy. And when my transfer came through to Malaysia, my boss, who was an elderly gentleman I think on his last tour in the Foreign Service, head of the Economic Section, in my last efficiency report, which was a favorable report, said: "I think that Hart's assignment to Kuala Lumpur is a good one because his body will now be where his sympathies have been for two years."

*Q: Today is February 1, 1993, and this is a continuing interview with Ambassador Samuel Hart. Sam, we got you out of Djakarta in 1964.*

HART: In the nick of time.

*Q: Then you didn't go very far; you went to Kuala Lumpur.*

HART: As my boss said, my body moved to where my heart had been all along.

*Q: You were there for two years, '64 to '66.*

HART: A little less than two years, that's right.

*Q: What were you doing there?*

HART: Well, I was supposed to go there as a member of the Political Section. But there was a quick shuffle by some people who were already there, so when I arrived, the Political Section job had been filled by somebody who was already present at the post. And I was given the choice of being the American consul in Kuala Lumpur or going to the Economic Section. And since I had figured I'd just as soon get my consulate tour out of

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the way, and because the Economic Section was not a very attractive place to work at that time, I did a year of consular work. And after that, I shifted over to the Political Section, where the Political Section chief was Bob Moore. I don't know whether you know Bob Moore or not.

Q: Yes.

HART: A very, very fine officer.

*Q: What was the sort of political/economic/social situation in Malaysia at that time? Or was it Malaysia at that time?*

HART: It was Malaysia. It had become Malaysia, of course, about a year before I got there, in '63. And that was the signal for Sukarno to declare a confrontation against Malaysia (which he considered a British colonialist plot against him and Indonesia), which of course ended up in a war between the British Commonwealth forces and Indonesia, fought mainly in Borneo, but not entirely, because you did, during the period '63-'64, have two or three Indonesian landings on the peninsula, platoon-size landings that didn't get anywhere; they were wiped out. The main battle lines were in godforsaken jungle over in Sabah and Sarawak. You know, that is the end of the world. But there were a couple of landings by Indonesian troops on the peninsula, which were picked up and snuffed out.

Notwithstanding that external tiff, Malaysia was off to a good start, having been, I would say, the crown jewel, in terms of colonial experiences, for the British. I think they had learned enough by their mistakes elsewhere that by the time they came, very late to the game, to colonial status in Malaya-Singapore, they realized that one day independence was going to come and it paid to get the people who were going to be the leaders of the new country educated enough in all forms of activities—whether it be medical or administrative or legal or whatever—so that they could be reasonably self-sufficient in governing themselves when they became independent. And they invested a lot in the infrastructure—both human and physical infrastructure—of Malaya prior to independence.



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So when independence came, it was not as rough a road as in most places. You didn't have a dearth of educated people, for example.

But you did have something there that was troublesome then and is still troublesome now, which is, of course, a multiracial society. With the population approximately 50 percent Malay, 30 percent Chinese, and 20 percent Indian, Eurasian, European, and what have you, a lot of Tamils, then you get all kinds of racial conflicts and strife, because the Malays, under the constitution of Malaysia, were given the political power, and everybody knew that the Chinese had the economic power. So you have a built-in tension, which occasionally erupts in racial violence.

But Malaysia is a lovely little country, and it was a pleasure to live in Kuala Lumpur, although for me personally it was one of the most difficult moments of my life. Because not long after I arrived there, my wife and I were going down to Singapore, and we had an automobile accident and she was killed. I never held that against Malaysia, but still, my time there is one that always will be looked at through that personal experience.

While I was in Malaysia, Indonesian confrontation was ended, in part because of the overthrow of Sukarno. I left Indonesia in, I think, July, went on home leave, got to Malaysia in October, and Sukarno was overthrown, I think, around November or something like that. I can't remember exactly, but it was shortly after I arrived in Malaysia that Sukarno was overthrown.

*Q: I think it straddled a month. I think it was September, October. [EB says the coup was September 30, 1965, but Suharto did not become president until March 1968.]*

HART: There was one big political event while I was there, Stu, although it ended up not being as big a deal as everybody feared it would be. Lee Kuan Yew, "the George Washington of Singapore," had brought Singapore into the federation on September 16, 1963. But on the morning of August 9, 1965, we woke up and Singapore was no longer in the federation. Tunku Abdul Rahman, the prime minister of Malaysia, had decided he'd

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had enough of Lee Kuan Yew's Chinese lip, and one night he said, "That's it, baby, you're out of here," and Singapore was out of the federation—a unilateral act on the part of the prime minister, who had a solid majority in the parliament and he didn't have to worry about where the votes were coming from. And that was it.

*Q: What was the embassy reaction to this? I'm sure everything at that point was predicated on what we considered the fragility of Southeast Asia. The Vietnam War was going and we were just getting cranked-up into it. I'm sure we saw everything in terms of what does this mean to the Communists and all that, so how did that hit us?*

HART: Well, I'm not sure that it was looked at quite this way. Kuan Yew was a known quantity to us.

You may recall that Kuan Yew, in '65, I guess it was, caused the United States a great amount of discomfort. He was staunchly anti-Communist. The intelligence function in Malaysia and Singapore was a British MI-5 function. There were some limits on what we were supposed to get into there. Supposedly MI-5 took the lead, and the CIA was just more or less a bit player in the whole thing.

Well, of course, as it happens in most intelligence things, we were cheating. And in other instances, they were cheating. And we had a bandit down in Singapore, a cabinet minister who was on the CIA payroll. One night they had him wired to a polygraph in a safe house in Singapore. This happened in the early Sixties. The Singapore MI-5 burst in on the safe house and there's this cabinet minister wired to the polygraph. Kuan Yew was really pissed off, but he didn't go public on us.

But after Singapore became independent and Kuan Yew got to a point where he was asking the United States for aid, he wasn't getting the answers from Secretary of State Dean Rusk that he wanted to get. And his response was, "If you keep saying things like

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you're saying right now about me, I'm going to go public about this thing." He didn't get the money, and he did go public.

And the immediate response of the ambassador in Kuala Lumpur, as well as Dean Rusk in Washington, was: "This is all a lie. CIA didn't have one of his cabinet members wired." Everybody in the embassy knew that they did. And in the end, he proved that they did. And it made a big fool out of the American ambassador in Kuala Lumpur, and out of Dean Rusk.

But we weren't big players. And I don't think there was a general feeling that the breakup of Malaysia was a big setback in the anti-Communist movement, in part because it was just about that time that the end to the emergency in Malaysia took place, which had been going on for about 15 years. The Malaysian Communist rebellion along the Thailand-Malaysia border had been reduced to nothing more than a little irritant, a couple of hundred people, something like that. Of course, it never amounted to more than about 5,000, and it tied down 100,000 troops. But it was gone. So we didn't look at it as a big geopolitical crisis, I don't think. And even to the extent that it was a crisis, it wasn't ours. It was British.

*Q: What was the feeling that you were picking up, although it had ended about the time you got there, about this confrontation with Indonesia? The Malays, I mean, this was in Borneo, did they feel anything akin to their... or was this just...*

HART: No, no, they didn't. There really was not. I think the Indonesians counted on that. When they landed these forces by rubber boat, or something like that, on the shores of southern Malaya, down around Johore and that area, I think what the Indonesians counted on was that there would be Malay villagers who would flock out and welcome the Indonesians with open arms as liberators from the oppression of the British and the Chinese. Well, the first thing the Malays did was run to the head man and report it to the district officer. And the Indonesians were in custody in 48 hours. There wasn't that feeling

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at all, no. Q: Back to your work as consul. Was there much work? This was the beginning of sort of the drug culture, young American kids going abroad and all that. Did you get involved in that at all?

HART: Well, it was a big time of the Peace Corps. We had a very large Peace Corps contingent in Malaysia, and that was the biggest number of American young people that we had around. I think we had, at that time, two or three hundred, which was a pretty good-sized Peace Corps effort.

I did consular work under the ideal circumstances. If you ever wanted to do consular work and avoid the usual downside of it, Kuala Lumpur was the place. It was a one-man consular office, with a very good local employee, an under subscribed quota...

*Q: This was a visa quota, which means you didn't have much demand for immigrant visas.*

HART: An under subscribed immigrant visa quota. And you weren't on the tourist track, so you weren't going down and getting people out of jail. Occasionally a drunk sailor would miss ship in Port Swettenham, or something like that. Singapore had much more of the hassle of consular work. But I had a very pleasant time. I was just in there for a year. I got a lot of satisfaction from the job, because, unlike political work or economic work, you could go home at the end of the day and you could say, "I did something today which either reduced somebody's suffering or made them happy." There was a beginning, a middle, and an end on most of these things, and you could see how your handiwork had affected things, unlike reporting. So, although I didn't want to stay beyond the year that I had on the job, I came away from that with kind of a rosy glow. It was just a nice little mix of welfare and protection work. Occasionally a Peace Corps volunteer would come in and say, "Gee, I've met this super guy up in this village. I'm teaching English up in this little Malay village, and I've got this boyfriend who's the greatest thing ever, and we're going to get married. What do you think about it? Somebody told me I ought to come talk to you." And I would sit there and I'd tell her about all the dangers of intercultural

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marriages, particularly if she was marrying into a Muslim Malay family, and what the role of the woman was, and this, that, and the other thing. But in the end, they always did it.

*Q: Yes, I did the same in Saudi Arabia. It really doesn't work very well, because it sounds like we're being race conscious. It wasn't that, it's just that the...*

HART: It's a cultural problem.

*Q: It's a cultural problem, because at a certain point, particularly American women can't take it any more and want to go home, and they can't get their babies out. And then, from our point of view, it becomes a consular problem, because we have to say, "We can't sneak your babies out, lady."*

HART: Well, I probably was not the run-of-the-mill consular officer. I arrogated to myself certain judgments which were not provided for in the manual. Since we had an under subscribed quota, I looked at each non-immigrant-visa applicant as if he or she were an immigrant-visa applicant, because we did have a fair number of change-of-status cases. When somebody would come in and say, "I've got this reason to go to the States for a visit for business or pleasure," I didn't look at them as NIVs, I looked at them as immigrant-visa cases. And if I thought they'd make good American citizens, I gave them a visa. And if I didn't think they'd make good American citizens, I didn't give them a visa. I just didn't do it.

I'll tell you a story. I was out of the Consular Section. We had a junior officer in there, who's still at the State Department. His name is Bill Farrand. Do you know Bill Farrand?

*Q: No, I don't, no.*

HART: Well Bill was a first-tour FSO-8. He had gone in to be the vice consul when I had moved to the Political Section, but I still kind of went down there two or three times a day to see if anything was going on that I needed to advise Bill on. One day, as I was going down to the office, the off-duty Marines were all standing there, the elevators doors

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opened and out walks this real babe. I mean, this is a Chinese babe what was. And she's headed into the consular office. I went in there, and Bill was in the office, and I said, "Man, you've got a live one outside."

He said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Well, see this babe outside. She's something. I don't know what she is, but she's something."

Her name was like Lily Chong, and she was a big strip artist in one of the nightclubs down in the Chinese section of town. And she wanted to come to the States on a visitor's visa. I said to Bill, "You better bring her in here and interview her." And so he did. I stood over to the side while he interviewed her. And the story was that she was going to make an around-the-world tour in the company of an Australian veterinarian who worked for the race tracks. He was one of the primary veterinarians for race horses. He was a gentleman of about our years, and she was a hot young ticket.

"Well, what funds do you have?"

"Why, I don't have any funds, but here's my ticket, and he's guaranteed me all my expenses."

So she left, and Bill said, "Well, I don't see any reason why we can't give her a visa."

I said, "You give her a visa, and your efficiency report just went through the bottom. You've got no future in the Foreign Service."

And he said, "Why?"

And I said, "Because she and Charlie whoever his name is, the Australian, get over to the States and have a fight, and he'll drop her, take the tickets and everything else and leave her after that. She'll be there without a job, without money, or anything. But she won't be

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unemployed for long. And technically speaking, by the regulations, they're going to the States for immoral purposes. They're going there to fornicate in as many places as they can find. But I'm not worried about that; I'm worried about her becoming a public charge if he ditches her. So you can't give her a visa."

"What grounds am I going to give for not giving her a visa?"

She's outside. I said, "Tell her to bring the guy in."

So an appointment was set up, and in due course she came in with the guy. And I was there. Bill was really feeling very uncomfortable about this. The guy and I, according to him, had met at some party up in one of the other towns in Malaysia when I was up there playing in a golf tournament. I didn't remember it, but anyway...

When it came down to brass tacks, I said to him, "Look, you're a big boy and I'm a big boy. Now we can sit here and we can be cute with each other, and if you really try to pin me down, I'm going to say some things you don't want to hear. But my suggestion to you is as follows: Have your around-the-world trip, but don't go through the States. Go through Mexico. It's nice in Mexico, you'll enjoy it. If you push me on this, I'm going to deny a visa, so don't do it."

And he said, "Okay." And that was the end of the case, I thought.

But then the ambassador started getting phone calls from all the high-ranking Malaysian ministers in the government, who had been sleeping with this babe. To the credit of the ambassador and DCM, they never put the screws to me, and those people never got visas. It was that kind of thing. It was a lighthearted thing.

*Q: The ambassador during your time was James D. Bell.*

HART: You just know everything, don't you.

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*Q: Well, I have a book; I look it up.*

HART: That's right, Jim Bell.

*Q: What was he like? How did he operate his embassy?*

HART: Oh, I liked Jim Bell. He delegated a lot of the donkey work to his DCM, a guy named Don McHugh, who was DCM during most of my time there. Later on, Bob Moore, who was Political Section chief, moved up to be DCM. But that was mainly after I left. That's an unusual thing when it happens, too, to move somebody up from section chief to DCM.

But Jim Bell was a big, bluff, hearty, red-faced, hard-drinking Irishman (I don't think he had an alcohol problem, but he liked to drink), who was a smart guy, political type (not a political appointee, but a political officer), who loved to play golf. I was an FSO-5, I guess, at the time, and shortly after I got there, since I was the low handicap in the embassy, Jim Bell asked me if I wanted to go out and play golf with him on Wednesday afternoon at the Royal Selangor Golf Course. And of course, I was always ready to do that. He would have a few dollars bet, and he and I would play partners. The first time or two we won. And then the third time, I had about a five-foot putt on the last hole that if I made it, we won, and if I didn't, we lost. I missed it, and I don't think I ever got asked back again. Jim didn't like to lose.

In Kuala Lumpur, as part of the British tradition, probably the "in" activity for males was golf. The king played golf; he had his own little separate dressing room out at the Royal Selangor Golf Club. The prime minister was an avid golfer; the deputy prime minister was an avid golfer. There were very few golfers in the embassy. Over my lifetime in the Foreign Service, there always were very few golfers in the embassy, and in some cases I was the only one. But it opened up enormous possibilities sometimes. I mean, if Tun Abdul Razak, who was the deputy prime minister and became prime minister of Malaysia for so many



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years, was standing in the shower stall with you, naked, after a golf game, that put you on a different basis with him than if you met him at a cocktail party. And that's the way it was; everybody who was anybody in the political and economic hierarchy in Malaysia played golf. But Foreign Service people missed it, because they didn't.

*Q: Well, I know golf was extremely important in Korea when I was there, and had been. In Asia, golf is an important thing. Certainly it was the only contact I think we ever had during most of the time, from the Sixties and Seventies and into the Eighties, in Burma.*

HART: Well, over the years, I've found that the people with whom I had the lasting personal relationships were not the business contacts. They were the golfing contacts. Now sometimes they overlapped, a business contact was a golfing contact. I always tried to tell junior officers and what have you: "have an interest and participate actively in it when you're overseas, because it gets you into the culture in a way that you need to be if you're going to understand what's going on." It gives you sources of information who will talk to you in a way, because they don't feel like it's a business deal, that you can't get simply by normal cocktail-circuit-type stuff. You can make real friends. After all, we are intelligence officers. And when people talk to a political officer, or whoever, from the American Embassy, I think the fact that you are a political officer and an intelligence officer shapes to some degree what they say to you.

*Q: Well, it should.*

HART: It should. It should. When you're no longer that, when you are a fellow birdwatcher, you get different kinds of information and different answers to the same questions. And I think that Foreign Service people, particularly in the modern time, miss a lot of that.

*Q: Let's talk a bit, sort of for the uninitiated, about what you did as a political officer at this post. How does one write reports?*

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HART: Well, I had been a political officer in my first post, in Montevideo, then I switched to economic officer, then I went to Djakarta and I was an economic officer there. And at that time, there was a lot more cachet to being a political officer than to being anything else, although I chose not to be a political officer. Consciously I decided that I wanted to be essentially an economic officer. But I didn't want to serve in the Economic Section in Kuala Lumpur, and I did this other political thing. I did not come to that, saying what does a political officer do, since I'd already done it and I'd been in the Foreign Service long enough to know.

You have certain areas of responsibility. One area of responsibility (as I'm trying to remember) involved covering the parliament, so I would go up lots of mornings to the Malaysian parliament and listen to the debates if something was scheduled that I thought we had an interest in. Let's see what else I had on my plate. I think I was covering relationships between Kuala Lumpur and Sabah and Sarawak, as I recall, so I tried to get to know at least the parliamentary representatives from those areas. You could tell them because they were the ones who had exotic feathers coming out of their headdresses—birds of something.

There were parliamentary elections coming up during this not-quite-year that I was in the Political Section there, and I did a fair amount of traveling around. I would go to some town, Alor Star (isn't that a wonderful name?) or someplace like that, and would go call on the district officer and various political people around and discuss politics with them.

I was the protocol officer, so I got to accompany the ambassador on some of his trips around the country, which were kind of fun.

How you write the reports...I think most political officers start the day off doing the same thing, and that is, they read the newspaper, and the newspaper tells you what's going on and gives you the clues about where to start asking questions. I had some Foreign Ministry contacts, if it was a foreign-affairs thing; I had some parliamentary contacts, if it

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was an internal matter. Go ask the questions and come back and write the report. I'm not sure what else there was to it.

*Q: Was our feeling at that time that for really main influence and all, we left things more to the British?*

HART: Right.

*Q: So we worked at being secondary players?*

HART: Right. When the Tunku threw Kuan Yew out of the federation, he called the British high commissioner first. He called the British high commissioner about ten minutes to midnight, and he threw Kuan Yew out at midnight. That's how much notice he had. The American ambassador, I think, got a call from the British high commissioner sometime after that, saying this is coming down. Those were the lines, as they should be.

*Q: Yes, yes.*

HART: The only person who didn't like it was the CIA station chief, a guy named Art Jacobs. Art Jacobs was barely over five feet, a little bitty guy. They used to say, "There's MI-5, and Art Jacobs is MI-4#."

*Q: Did you have a feeling the CIA was any more knowledgeable than anyone else?*

HART: No, no, not at all. It wasn't a bad bunch of people, but I didn't feel they were doing anything to advance the national interests of the United States, if you really want to know the truth. I must say, if you really want a gratuitous comment, in my 27 years in the Foreign Service I can't ever say that anything I saw the CIA do ever seriously advanced the foreign policy interests of the United States. Now that's a really sweeping statement, isn't it?

*Q: I would probably go along. In fact, I would say maybe even a little more. I can think of cases where the CIA...*

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HART: It was a net minus.

*Q: It was a net minus.*

HART: Well, I would say that, too, but I was being generous. A net minus. And they caused a lot of mischief, a lot of mischief.

*Q: Well, this was the problem. I think so much of it was a carry-over from the spirit of World War II, when everything was to do something right away and be mischievous. And in the long run, it didn't have real...*

HART: Well, in the end, the CIA only looked at the world through anti-Communist lenses. And it happened that, in the places where I served, the Communist versus non-Communist Cold War battles were not that important. Now you could say, "How can that be? You were in Indonesia." Yeah, but ideology was never the thing in Indonesia; nor was it, in Malaysia; nor was it, even in Uruguay. Sure, Castro was active and what have you, but in the end, there was never any real danger that the Uruguayans were going to embrace the Soviet Union as their savior. It wasn't going to happen.

So you're screwing around the edges of the thing, but in the process of doing that and throwing so many resources and so many people into it, you miss the really important things that are going on.

In our entire post-war period, up until practically the collapse of the Soviet Union, the right wing in this country was saying, "The other guys are winning. The other guys are winning." My feeling always was, "We're winning. And without the military might of the Soviet Union, they don't have a very saleable product."

Now you can find special cases where somehow or other the economic and political and historical forces came together, such as in Cuba and Nicaragua, so that countries not contiguous to the Soviet Union or another Communist country embraced the Marxist

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ideology and became Communist themselves. But Cuba and Nicaragua are the only cases of which I'm aware that the Communists were able to take power where it was not essentially out of the barrel of a gun, by being contiguous to a Communist state where military pressure was used, either through support for an internal rebellion or simply by putting the muscle across the border.

*Q: You were mentioning about how the political right wing in the United States was saying the Communists are winning, but they were also saying that time was on the side of the Communists.*

HART: That's right.

*Q: I think, to many of us looking at this thing...not that we saw the collapse that was going to come as it came...*

HART: Nobody saw that, left or right.

*Q: But the point being that, gee, the system really doesn't work very well, and who the hell's going to buy that?*

HART: Well, you know, the reason I came to this conclusion, that we weren't losing the Cold War and that we weren't going to lose the Cold War, was because everywhere that I served where there was any kind of debate going on about the relative merits of a democratic system versus the centrally guided, totalitarian, authoritarian regimes of the Communist world, overwhelmingly, overwhelmingly everybody came out in favor of personal freedom. And I just got the impression that there may be something more or less in the spirit of man that, if you have a choice toward one political system or another, tends to lead them to choose one more like ours than like the Soviets'.

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Now that's not to say that in special cases, if you don't have a choice, say, in Nicaragua, which spun out as a part of a long, long historical tragedy, if you want to call it that, you can't get a Communist regime in an unusual place. You can.

But I don't believe this is the kind of choice that free people make consciously. And I never thought that the Soviets were popular enough or smart enough or powerful enough or rich enough to beat us in place after place around the world in terms of what the model for the world's future was going to look like. I guess I had more faith in human nature than some of our brethren in the Agency did. And not just the brethren; after all, most American political leaders, and particularly those in the White House, bought this view of the world.

*Q: Well, then, you left Kuala Lumpur in 1966 and you came back to Washington. You were there for what, about a year or so?*

HART: Two years, from '66 to '68.

*Q: What were you doing there?*

HART: Came back and went to the Economics Course Number Two.

*Q: This was the very prestigious course that...*

HART: Prestigious, hardly.

*Q: But it was the first time we decided to seriously create people with the equivalent of quick Masters' degree in economics.*

HART: Yes, because suddenly people had said we can't recruit people with these talents, and somehow we don't seem to be very good at attracting people who have Masters' degrees in economics or in business. So we're going to train them in-house. And they had the six-month FSI economics course, at what was commonly known as Reinstein U. A Foreign Service officer by the name of Jack Reinstein was the original director of that

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course. And the guy who was the course chairman was named Warrick Elrod. And the guy who was kind of the chief teacher was John Sprott, who's now the deputy director, or whatever the title is, of FSI. I was in Class Two. That lasted six months.

I had planned to go to the Latin American Bureau, to an office called ECP, which was regional Economic and Political Affairs; it was the regional office in the ARA Bureau. I had been told that that was pretty much a done deal, and that's what I wanted to do. One day I got this phone call from the State Department's bowling queen, the Executive Director of EB. I don't know whether it was called EB or just E at that time.

*Q: This was the Economic Bureau, later called the Economic and Business Bureau.*

HART: Yes, I think it became EB later. But anyway, there was a famous (or infamous) executive director there, Frances Wilson, who was famous for having her way in personnel matters. She called me and said, "Well, are you ready to show up at the Office of Energy Affairs as soon as your course is over?"

I said, "Whoa, I ain't going there; I'm going to ECP."

And she said, "Who told you that?"

I said, "Well, it's all been worked out."

And she said, "No, it hasn't."

I said, "Well, that's my opinion."

The short of it was, Frances and I got into a struggle over where I was going to go, and I told her I would not go to the Energy Affairs Office, because that had nothing to do with economics, and I wanted to go someplace I could apply this wonderful knowledge I'd acquired in the previous six months. This all was happening right about Christmas/New Year's. The course was over just about Christmastime, and I was going to take some

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leave. And she said, "Well, if you don't want to go to Energy, you can go to the Temperate Products Division in the Food Policy Office of EB."

And I said, "I don't want to go there, either. I only want to go to the Latin American Bureau."

In the end, I said, "I don't plan to go there," and went on leave. She actually called my house, trying to find out when I was coming to work and what have you, because she was really upset.

I didn't get the assignment to ECP, and I did end up working for the Temperate Products Division of the Food Policy Office of EB, and stayed there for a year and a half, I guess. And then I went off to graduate economic studies after that.

*Q: What the hell does one do in the Temperate Products Division of EB?*

HART: Well, it was more interesting work than I had ever expected it to be. You know, I left Mississippi to try to get away from the farm, and it seemed like all my career I kept getting put back into agriculture one way or another, whether it was wool and meat in Uruguay, or rubber in Malaysia. I got into Temperate Products, and I had, I don't know, eight or ten different kinds of agricultural commodities which were important in international trade. I would do research on problems that had come up, such as: Are the Europeans subsidizing their poultry exports to Switzerland, and what we should do about it; and how much we would need to be able to compete in the Swiss market. This eventually became Chicken War II. I was a foot soldier in Chicken War II and Turkey War I.

*Q: Chicken War was a big one during the Kennedy period, in the early Sixties in Europe.*

HART: That's right, that was Chicken War I. I was a foot soldier in Chicken War II. And what happened was, the Europeans continued to subsidize poultry exports to certain markets. And Wilbur Mills was the chairman of the House...



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*Q: From Arkansas.*

HART: Yes, the number-one poultry-producing state in the United States. Tysons Poultry (bless Bill Clinton's heart) was a big power there, and Wilbur Mills was their man in Washington. He had decided, and the Department of Agriculture had agreed with him, that we were going to subsidize poultry exports. And my job was to present the State Department's case on whether this was a good idea or not.

So I did the research, and lo and behold, with or without subsidies, the Europeans simply could beat us on price. They were more efficient producers for the Swiss market than we were, simply because it cost too much to ship U.S. chickens over there.

Also, there was a quality difference, in that the Swiss liked yellow-meat poultry, and we produced mainly white-meat poultry. So there was a taste/appearance preference.

And what I tried to do was to convince USTR (the U.S. trade representative's office) and the Department of Agriculture that we should not spend ten to fifteen million dollars a year in U.S. taxpayers' money providing the Swiss with cheaper chickens than you could buy in Arkansas.

Needless to say, I failed.

And I spent a year and a half doing that kind of rewarding stuff.

I laugh about it simply because, in the process, you do learn a lot of stuff that you never think you're going to have any use for in the future. And you find, some days, you do. Okay, you learn about chickens, or you learn about soybeans, and you don't have any more reason to deal with those two things. But you learned enough about commodity markets so that when copper comes up later, the way the copper market operates is close enough to the way some of the markets operated that you know about that you become a

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quick study in it. You learn something about these commodity markets. And I always said, later on, that probably that was a very useful part of my education, being there.

*Q: What is the role of the State Department in commodity problems? Obviously, you have to have the Departments of Agriculture, Treasury, and Commerce, and Congress getting involved in something like this, but what's the State Department's role?*

HART: The long-term trend over my career was that the State Department had less and less say in trade matters than it had before. After World War II, the State Department was still the primary agency on trade policies. Commerce would get into it if it was industrial products, tariffs, what have you. And certainly on agricultural products, Agriculture had a legitimate interest in overseas markets, or in U.S. markets which were being taken up in part or in whole by imports.

But over time, State's influence waned, I think in part because they did not do a very good job at the top. They had some pretty good technicians, but there was not enough interest at the sixth- and seventh-floor levels.

*Q: The sixth and seventh floors are where the principal officers, including the secretary of state and his deputies, preside.*

HART: Right. There was not enough high-level interest in trade matters.

And the other agencies really worked the Hill much better than we did, because they had constituencies. We were trying to approach international trade essentially as: "How do we use this to advance our political interests?" They were approaching international trade as: "How do we use this to maximize the benefits for our constituents?" Not usually: "How do we maximize the benefits for the American public?" Very seldom did the American public get primary consideration from anybody. So if it was a tariff matter, the State Department might be looking at it as: "Well, it's a tariff matter involving Turkey. How does this affect our NATO relationships?" If it was a tariff matter with Turkey, in Agriculture they were saying:

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“How's this going to play at the American Farm Bureau?” And on the Hill, of course, they were listening both to voting constituents and to various special interest groups representing constituencies.

I think, given this kind of setup, it's not surprising that, over time, State found they had less and less influence. And it lost the trade policy functions to USTR. When was USTR set up?

*Q: I'm not sure.*

HART: I think it was during the Kennedy administration, maybe. It was either under Kennedy or Johnson that the U.S. trade representative's office was set up.

That was trade policy, and once State lost trade policy, then it really didn't have any horses. We were still barely holding on to the commercial-attach# function, which gave us some people on the ground who could make some claim to helping American business. But AID was a separate organization, so we didn't have the aid function. The Commercial Service was in the process of slipping away to Commerce. And the trade-policy function essentially fell into USTR.

So I spent a lot of time, as did everybody in the Seventies in the Economic and Business Bureau, trying to get invited to meetings where a subject that we thought had foreign-policy implications was going to be discussed and maybe decided. When you have a hard time getting into meetings, bureaucratically there's a message there, and that is, that your impact on policy will only be a function of the personal skills of the people who are involved. Institutionally you already are a whipped puppy if you've got to scramble to get into meetings.

And, of course, it's been downhill since then. And in the latest whatever it's called, something 2000 Report that Lannon...oh, Lannon Walker was the other guy who was

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on that panel the other day with me. Lannon Walker was, I guess, the head man on this Report 2000.

*Q: Which was: Whither the State Department in the 21st Century?*

HART: In the new, post-Cold-War era. Lannon Walker and his group tried to address the issue of how does the State Department increase its influence in economic and commercial policy matters, and they had a few suggestions and recommendations. But my feeling is that, whether that be the subject or something else, unless you have either some human or financial resources when you go to the bargaining table that's going to hammer out policy in Washington, D.C., you're not going to have much effect on the policy. Simply being intellectually brilliant and clear sighted and having the best interests of the country at heart won't even get you into the meeting, some of the time, and won't win you many points, any of the time.

*Q: Well, having had this experience in the ECON Bureau, you then got thrown back into the ARA briar patch.*

HART: Well, I went off to university training; I went to Vanderbilt.

I had decided that really I wasn't sure I wanted to stay in the State Department. I was kind of in the winter of my discontent. I was an FSO-5 and wondering when I was going to get promoted to Four. I had remarried and had two children. I knew a lot of people who had gone into other parts of government who had certainly done much, much better than I had. I just wasn't sure whether or not I wanted to get out.

I had decided that one way to make that possible would be to go back to school and get a Ph.D. in economics. So when I went to Vanderbilt in 1968, I went with the intent of staying for a Ph.D. I enrolled in the Ph.D. program, not in the Masters' program, and took all the really hard courses.

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But after only about three months there, I realized that if I wanted to do that, I had gone to the wrong school. I should have gone to the Kennedy School or some place like that where you can do a quick-and-dirty Ph.D. You can do a quick-and-dirty, three-year Ph.D. at the Kennedy School, no problem. To do a Ph.D. in economics at Vanderbilt (which was a school on the make), they were going to extract a minimum of four, and probably five, years out of you. Because they were on the make, they were not going to let you out of there with any less apprenticeship than that. That was just the way they were going to screw you around. And it didn't take me all that long to figure out that didn't make sense in my case.

So I did a one-year Masters', and then I went back to ARA. I had been told that I was going to be the section chief in La Paz, and when I wrote my thesis at Vanderbilt, it was on economic development in the Santa Cruz region of Bolivia, because I thought that's where I was going.

And then, at the last moment, it really was into the briar patch. I was told that the ambassador had some person that he wanted to put into that job, so ARA couldn't offer me that job anymore. But I could have my choice among Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Costa Rica. That took me all of about five seconds to decide. So that's how I got to San Jos#.

*Q: What was the situation in Costa Rica, which has always been considered the one sort of bright spot in the Central American mess?*

HART: Justifiably so. We're talking 1969. Costa Rica had become a democracy in '48, and Pep# Figueres was, to use the cliché again, "the George Washington of Costa Rica." When I arrived in Costa Rica in '69, they were just entering into another presidential election, and Pep# was running for president again.

It was early in the Nixon administration. Henry Kissinger was in the White House. Ambassadorships were being sold to the highest bidders. When I was assigned to Costa

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Rica, we had a career Foreign Service officer as ambassador there. He was told that he was not going to be kept on, and was moved out, anticipating the arrival of Mrs. Ruth Farkas. She and her husband owned Alexander's Department Store in New York and donated three hundred thousand dollars to Richard Nixon's presidential campaign in '68. She thought that entitled her to the Court of Saint James; what it got her was San Jos#. There had been a charg# there, a guy by the name of Sandy Pringle, for several months. And at just the time I arrived there, in like October of '68, word got out that Ruth Farkas was not coming, because she and her husband had major-league problems with the IRS on income tax evasion. And even Richard Nixon couldn't fix that. So Ruth Farkas didn't come, and after a few months, we did get a political-appointed ambassador, who's name was Walter Ploeser, who had been a political-appointee ambassador to Paraguay in the Eisenhower administration. I think his main contribution to the wisdom of the State Department was that Alfredo Stroessner was a leftist.

*Q: Oh, God. For the uninitiated, Stroessner was a good, Germanic, Latin American dictator for 30 years or something.*

HART: At least 30.

*Q: Who was very much a rightist, in his own way.*

HART: Well, this guy, Walter Ploeser, was a former Republican member of the House from St. Louis, Missouri. He had been defeated, I think, in the Sixties, and he was in the insurance business when he wasn't in the Congress. And his clout, in terms of getting the job, was that he was a major fund raiser for the Republican Party in St. Louis. Walter arrived in San Jos# about three or four months, I guess, after I got there. There had been an interregnum between the departure of the last ambassador and Ploeser's arrival of about eight months—quite a long time. The first few months I was there, everything was wonderful, the DCM was a good, solid professional, and the embassy was running like a top. Then here came Walter Ploeser, and things took a decided downhill turn.

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Costa Rica is a little island of tranquility and democracy, the most democratic country I've ever been in, including our own. Because, literally, the president would be strolling down the street and go into a coffee shop and be sitting there drinking a cup of coffee, and a street sweeper might go up to him and say, "Señor Presidente, I have a little problem I'd like to discuss with you." And it was really that way. There was a sense of community. There was a sense of patriotism, a sense of pride in the national institutions, in their own ability to govern themselves democratically, in Costa Rica, that was unique in Latin America. It really was.

Why did it happen in Costa Rica and not elsewhere? Gosh, political scientists will argue about this; but it was in part because historical accidents had led them down a certain path and it seemed to foster that.

But it really worked.

The CIA had a bug in the living room of Pepe Figueres's house. And during the election campaign (this is all information that I learned much, much later), Pepe had the head of the Costa Rican Communist Party (which could field 5,000 votes in any election; and that's all they could do) into his house, and had sat in front of that microphone, and Pepe had made a deal. Now this was the same Pepe Figueres who had been on the CIA payroll for years and years. And he told the head of the Communist Party of Costa Rica, "If you will pay me a certain amount of money, when I become president, I'll do two things that you want. I'll legalize the Party" (which had been made illegal by Figueres many years before) "so that you can again become the Communist Party of Costa Rica instead of some other name that you had. And I will establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union." And a deal was struck.

Now for anybody who knew anything about Pepe Figueres and Costa Rican politics, this would have been a cause for amusement. But, you see, this happened at a time when people making these decisions in the United States, which we talked about before, looked

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at the world in this peculiar way, that everything boiled down to: Them and Us. And the conclusion reached in the CIA and to some degree in the White House (which was, with no trouble at all, sold to Walter Ploeser as they were preparing him to come to Costa Rica) was that Pep# Figueres was intent on handing Costa Rica over to the Communists. So when Walter Ploeser arrived in Costa Rica, the good times did not roll. Relationships which had been really solid for years and years started to unravel. Ploeser couldn't stand Figueres and made no bones about it; Figueres couldn't stand Ploeser and made no bones about it. Figueres would say to lesser-ranking people, "When are you dumb ass holes going to get rid of that Fascist ambassador you have here?"

And we'd say, "Well, Don Pep#, if you really want to do that, then you can do that. That's something you can do."

He said, "I'm not going to take the heat for this. He's your problem."

Combined with this, we had an alcoholic CIA station chief, a guy by the name of Earl Williams, who on a personal basis was a nice guy, but on a professional basis was a total nincompoop. Married to a Cuban refugee of the M#s Canosa mind. As an anti-Communist Cuban refugee, she had good reason to be anti-Communist.

*Q: But from the extreme...*

HART: From the extreme right, the extreme right. From Batista not being a bad guy.

*Q: Batista being the long-time military dictator of Cuba, who was...*

HART: Overthrown by Castro in '58.

Anyway, Earl and the ambassador were the only people who knew about this bug. You wouldn't see cables going out of there, but you would hear echoes of cables that had gone through CIA channels about the awful situation in Costa Rica. Nobody saw these cables except a few communicators and the ambassador and maybe the ambassador's secretary



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and the station chief. And what they were doing was painting a systematic picture of a country that was on the verge of falling into the Communist camp, and if we didn't do something about it, it probably would.

Now I do not know precisely what was done, but over about an 18-month period, from the beginning of '70 to the middle of '71, enough things happened that were suspicious, that Pep# Figueres and the people around him were convinced that CIA and the ambassador were conspiring to overthrow his regime.

As I say, I don't know what happened, but I do know that at one point a former ambassador to Venezuela, a liberal Democrat named, I think, Walter Stewart, was dispatched to Costa Rica to warn Figueres that if he didn't shape up, he was certainly going to incur great displeasure from us, and blah, blah, blah.

Now what, in fact, was happening was there was no threat whatsoever to his interests.

The embassy was cordoned off between the ambassador and the station chief and his MILGROUP commander, an MP lieutenant colonel, very knowledgeable fellow about nuances of politics...

*Q: You're saying this with a twist.*

HART: There's a certain amount of sarcasm in the comment. And the rest of the embassy. And only slowly did some of the rest of us figure out what was going on. And when we did, there was a revolt. There was an open revolt. We blew this thing into the open.

*Q: Explain how one blows something into the open.*

HART: Well, at that time, just certain remarks by the ambassador, and other things that had happened, let us know that something was not right. I was the head of the Economic

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and Commercial Section, and the head of the AID Public Administration Division; I had two jobs. The head of the Political Section was a guy named Bart Moon.

The DCM was a man of totally no talent and no character by the name of Ellwood P. Ravenold, Pete Ravenold. If you ever want to find Sam Hart's view of the antithesis of what a Foreign Service officer or a public servant should be, look up Pete Ravenold and you'll have him. He was a man on whose tombstone I hope they carve: "Here lies Pete Ravenold, who never compromised a principle—because he never had one." Pete Ravenold saw his role as somehow keeping Walter Ploeser happy. He had no interest in substantive matters.

So it fell to the AID director and me to try to do something about what we considered at least an appearance, if not an actual fact, of the American government conniving in the overthrow of a friendly democratic government.

The AID director, a guy named Larry Harrison, was the ambassador's b#te noire. He was considered a Jewish liberal who was totally misguided, and in the end ended up being, according to the ambassador's view, a traitor. He was not following the ambassador's line as AID director and was passing information to the Costa Ricans, with whom he was very tight, particularly with the foster son of Pep# Figueres. As a result of that, Larry got on the ambassador's shit list.

There was a d#nouement when Walter Stewart came to Costa Rica and we finally figured out what was going on. The Costa Ricans declared the station chief, Earl Williamson, PNG (persona non grata) because, among other things, Earl had sung anti-Figueres songs at the Club Union in Lim#n, in public view.

This is all trying to put into a few sentences something that played out over about six months and was terribly complex. I have it in writing someplace if you ever want to see what happened.

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But the end result was I was put in charge of drafting the CASP (Country Analysis and Strategy Paper) for Costa Rica.

*Q: Which at that time was: What are our objectives? What are we going to do? How are we going to go about them? —within each country. A country-policy statement.*

HART: The CASP is supposed to say what U.S. interests are and how you achieve them. But it really involves rather deep political analysis about what's going on in the country. There was a CASP group; a couple of other people and I wrote it (this was before all of the business about the taps and what was going on came out) and said, "Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that Pep# Figueres wanted to hand Costa Rica over to the Communists. Could he do it?" And the paper said, "No. Even if he spent 26 hours a day plotting about how to hand it over to the Communists, he could not do it, because that's not the way Costa Rica works."

The ambassador got this; he refused to send it in. I pointed out to him that he didn't have that option, that he had the right to attach a dissent to it if he wished to, but the CASP was not his baby.

*Q: This is interesting. Why was this not? Normally an ambassador's in charge of a mission, and everything that goes out basically is his. HART: Because it was an interagency paper which was supposed to reflect the considered opinion of the embassy. If there was a difference of views, you were supposed to list the difference of views in kind of an appendix or a dissenting opinion, almost like a dissenting opinion on the Supreme Court. But the unanimous opinion of the people who had drafted the CAS was: This was the situation. His response was: This CASP ain't going out. And so he had the MILGROUP commander draft his CASP. Then the struggle became: Who was going to sign off on which CASP? And I said, "Very well, we'll send ours as the dissent." So we sent in two CASPs to the Department: one was the ambassador's CASP, on which he and the MILGROUP commander signed off; the other one was the dissenting CASP, on which*

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*every other agency represented in the embassy signed off, including CIA, because the section chief had been thrown out and CIA had sent down a temporary station chief who signed off on the dissenting CASP. It said, "There is no Communist threat in Costa Rica." And both of those went to Washington. The only person who didn't sign off on either one of them was the DCM. He didn't sign off on either CASP.*

This blew the thing out in the open, combined with the fact that some of us had contact with Dante Fascell, who at that time was the head of the congressional Subcommittee on Latin America of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. There were contacts with Fascell and with the Miami Herald, blowing out what was going on. And the Miami Herald called for the recall of the ambassador, in two or three editorials.

Is this something that I would recommend to anybody to do, and that is, to go out of channels like we did? I'd say it's a close call. But I felt the stakes were big enough, and the attempts to get the State Department to do something about it were so unsuccessful. We went to the higher-ups in the State Department and said, "We have a terrible situation down here; do something about it." And every single one of them—whether it was Charlie Meyer, who was the assistant secretary for Latin America; Bob Hurwitch, who was his principal deputy; or the country director for Central America, Dick Breen, who was a nice guy and a good guy, an AID man (that was when we had State and AID back to back, or belly to belly, whatever you want to call it)—all said, "This is a fight we can't take on. This guy's too powerful in the White House." So two or three of us in the embassy took it on, and we blew this sucker out of the water. And that was the end of the hanky-panky in Costa Rica.

I got thrown out by the ambassador. The AID director got relieved and came back to Washington, and it took him, politically, about five or six years to recover. The DCM got promoted.

*Q: What happened to the ambassador?*

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HART: He stayed his two years. They removed him after two years, but they did not remove him as a result of this disgraceful debacle.

Now I have described it to you in ways that are probably totally unintelligible. What I've tried to do is telescope all kinds of things that it would take all morning to describe.

*Q: You said you wrote it up.*

HART: I wrote it up.

*Q: Could we have a copy of that, which will append to this.*

HART: Definitely.

*Q: There's one thing I'd like to discuss. I'm not familiar with this, so I find it fascinating. Something that is practically the leitmotif of, you might say, the academic left is how much American business controls our policy in Central America.*

HART: It had no effect. It had absolutely no effect on any...

*Q: On either side?*

HART: On either side.

*Q: This was not...*

HART: No. By the time I went to Costa Rica, the old conventional wisdom that U.S. policy in Central America was dominated by United Fruit Company was no longer true. There was a book written, called *Mama Uni* (Uni being the United Fruit Company), which puts forward the thesis that everything the American government did in Costa Rica was dictated by United Fruit, et cetera, which was still in print and still had a lot of credence when I was the economic/commercial guy in Costa Rica. But it wasn't true. It really wasn't. And I would

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say that in my entire career, I have never seen a case where American business influence was significant in determining policy, ever, in a country with which I was involved.

*Q: I must say, in my job, I have interviewed several hundred American ambassadors, and when I put the question: "Well, how much was our policy dominated by American business?" or "What were American business interests?", I usually get sort of a blank look, while there's a quick trying to figure out, "Gee, I really ought to saying something about how important it was." Which may show there were some problems, maybe we should have done more. But the point being that this just wasn't a main thing on our plate, certainly during the period we're talking about, from the end of World War II until the end of the Cold War, in '88.*

HART: That's exactly right, because security interests dominated.

*Q: Absolutely. This was, as you would put it, a misperception on the part of the people of where security interests lay.*

HART: Well, I think American academics and Latin Americans believe that American business interests called the tune, in a vast number of cases, on our policies in Latin America.

There was one case, which I don't know enough about to make a judgment on, when Roy Rubottom was the assistant secretary of state for Latin America (he was from Texas and had a lot of contacts with the Texas oil interests, Esso and what have you), about whether or not policy in Argentina was influenced by these Texas oil connections. I don't know enough about it to make a judgment.

But I can say that even in Chile, during the ITT/Allende thing and what have you, our concerns were not American business. They got into the act and mucked it up something fierce. But it was always strategic/political.

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*Q: If you're leftist and threatening business, that's not the big problem—if leftist means that the Communists are going to come in, which means the Soviet Union will come in. Tell me, did you feel at all, while you were in this brouhaha, the fine hand of Henry Kissinger?*

HART: Absolutely.

*Q: He was the national security advisor at that time. Could you say how he...*

HART: I don't know that Henry ever took a personal interest in Costa Rica. But I went from Costa Rica to Chile, and Henry certainly had a strong hand in what the perception was in Chile. You remember when Allende first won the election in Chile...I don't mean to skip all the way ahead to there, but in a moment of rather penetrating analysis, Henry said, "You know, it really worries me about Chile, which is a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica." But having been flip, and at the same time profound, in the case of Chile, he then proceeded to behave in a way that caused enormous, enormous problems.

*Q: Well, you say you were basically bounced out.*

HART: I was thrown out of Costa Rica, and I was moved from being the head of a 13-officer, 15-local outfit to being the number-three person in the economic/commercial hierarchy in Santiago, Chile.

*Q: Well, now was this ARA just...*

HART: This was an asshole .... did it to me.

*Q: Was this trying to bury you as an embarrassment? Was this considered a punishment, or just, "Hell, we've got to get him out, and let's find him a place."?*

HART: Well, you'd have to be able to look into the minds and hearts of the people involved. I do know this. When I made it known to the Personnel people that I really did want to leave Costa Rica, because my position there was untenable, I said to them, "But

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I hope you can arrange this in a way that, given the circumstances of my removal, that I don't look like I'm being punished." When I heard fourth-hand that I was being transferred to Santiago, Chile (and I heard it literally fourth-hand), I went to the DCM and I said, "Is this true?"

And he said, "Yeah, it's true."

And I said, "Well, what job am I going to?"

He said, "Well, I don't know about that."

And I said, "Isn't it kind of irregular for me to find out from the wife of a colleague, who's not even in my section, that I'm being transferred?"

"Oh, well we were going to get around to telling you sooner or later."

But the ambassador had cut a deal. They wanted an economic officer to go to Santiago right after the Allende election. They had a new economic/commercial counselor who was concurrently AID mission director there, who'd just come in to replace Dean Hinton. It was Joel Biller, who'd come from being Econ/Commercial counselor in Argentina. He took over Econ/Commercial and AID director, to phase out the AID mission in Chile, and he wanted an economics guy. So I was told I was it. And I said, "Wait a minute now. This is going to look like a demotion."

And they said, "Well, that's all we have."

I had long phone calls with Washington on this subject, with Sheldon Kryszewski, who at that time was the personnel guy in ARA. He worked for the executive director, Joan Clark.

*Q: I thought she was EUR.*

HART: She was later EUR; at that time, she was ARA/EX.



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And Sheldon was saying, "That's all we have."

I said, "Sheldon, I think I deserve better than this."

And he said, "Well, that's all there is."

I said, "In that case, I'm going to buy myself a plane ticket and I'm going to come to Washington and I'm going to do something about it, because I ain't going to take this kind of public humiliation."

So I bought a plane ticket and I went to Washington, and I said, "You say ARA can't do any better by me than this. Am I free to go find another bureau that can?"

And he said, "Yes."

So in a half hour I had gotten a good job in Australia, in the East Asia Bureau. Don McHugh, the old DCM from Kuala Lumpur days, was EX in East Asia, and I was going to become the economic/commercial guy in Canberra. And I thought, "Man, I've died and gone to heaven."

I went back to Sheldon and I told him, and he said, "Well, this is all contingent upon EA giving us a replacement for you. But okay."

I got back to Costa Rica, after having paid my way up and spending two days in Washington, and I hadn't been back 24 hours when I got a phone call saying, "We're not going to release you." He had never intended to release me. Never had intended to release me.

And so it was a question then about what to do. I had set up an appointment with Charlie Meyer, who was in San Jos#, Costa Rica, to attend an OAS (Organization of American States) general assembly. I had it set up to see him and to tell him that I thought this whole situation sucked. I was in the midst of a divorce proceeding, and I had a lot of personal

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things going on. And by that time, I was so tired, I said, "You know, maybe I'd better go on to Chile, because I'm just tired of fighting this thing, and time is running out on me. And I've got a situation at home I have to do something about."

So I went to Santiago.

*Q: Did you feel at all that Santiago, though, had an interest? It's nice, prestigious-wise and comfort-wise, to go to Canberra, but, after all, Chile was going through a really interesting time. How did you feel about that?*

HART: Well, I was told that I was selected because I was one of the few real economists practicing that arcane bit of witchcraft in the State Department, and they wanted a good economist to be down there with the Allende government. In fact, you could have trained Cheetah the Chimp to do the economic analysis of the Allende policies, because it was all straight downhill. The outcome was so easy to see that you didn't really need much of an economist. I was so mad, that the only thing that kind of got me out of the funk was that AFSA, which was aware of what was going on...

*Q: AFSA being the American Foreign Service Association.*

HART: Was aware of what was going on.

*Q: Sort of our union.*

HART: Yeah. They were excluded. The exclusive bargaining agent for State. But they knew something about what was happening in Santiago. Bill Harrop was the president of AFSA at that time. They were aware of the Santiago thing, and I got a cable one day telling me I had been selected for the Rivkin Award. And so I was able to come to Washington.

*Q: You're talking about the San Jos# problem, not the Santiago one.*

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HART: Right, talking about the San Jos# problem. And I was selected for the Rivkin Award because of what happened in San Jos#.

*Q: Which is the highest award for showing dissent. It's within the State Department bounds, but honoring people who've shown dissent under difficult circumstances.*

HART: It's given by the union, not by the State Department. Although at the awards ceremony, I was seated next to William Rogers, the Secretary of State, who stood up and said some very nice things about what a contribution I'd made to American foreign policy. And my only thoughts were, "If you'd done your job, I would have never been put in this stupid situation. You would have gotten rid of that goddamn Walter Ploeser, and you wouldn't have made a junior officer do it."

Of course, I didn't get rid of Walter Ploeser; Walter Ploeser outlasted me. But at least the fangs had been drawn, and he wasn't able to do any more significant harm.

But I was mad, and I never forgave Sheldon Kryz. If you really want to look at the people whom I think are scumbags in the Foreign Service, it's people like Pete Ravenold and Sheldon Kryz. And I wouldn't hesitate for a minute to tell them so. I think they both know exactly how I feel.

*Q: Sam, now we come to...*

HART: Let me interject an editorial comment. You may have noticed by now that I'm a man of rather strong opinions. And let me tell you why I am.

I believe that a public servant who doesn't have any beliefs, doesn't have any principles, can't be a very good public servant. And my quarrel with the State Department over the years, and with a lot of my colleagues in the State Department, was not that I thought that they had the wrong beliefs, but that so many of them had no beliefs for which they were willing to jeopardize anything. And a belief for which you're not willing to pay something

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isn't much of a belief. So I always thought that the way that a professional behaved was to tell the truth, as he was given to know the truth, without concern about career, without concern about what his next assignment was going to be, because anything less was not being professional. Over and over and over I found that not many people agreed with that. And that's the reason I say things about the people like Pete Ravenold and Sheldon Kryss.

*Q: I think one of the great flaws in our group is that there is a tendency to try to find compromise. Which is part of diplomacy, often. But the problem is, sometimes it moves away from what may be a tactical way of getting something done to compromising yourself, out of reaching accommodation.*

HART: You know these swearing-in ceremonies they have up on the eighth floor? I've been to a few over time, and one of the ones that really impressed me, in terms of what was said there (and very few had), was when an old friend of mine named Dick Bloomfield was sworn in as ambassador to Portugal, or maybe it was to Ecuador, and he gave a speech that I thought was right on. He talked about what he believed and what he thought was important—his own values. And I said, “You know, if by some quirk I should ever be in a position to give one of these things, I hope that I can say something that's meaningful, too, and not this hollow stuff that usually passes for elegant speech making by our distinguished ambassadorial designees.”

When I did have that occasion, what I said, in effect, was, “You know, in this service of ours, and I think this is probably true in politics also, you start out thinking you have something to contribute. But the system itself, over time, has a way of grinding away at your idealism, and grinding away at your values, to a point that, where originally you wanted to get to a position of power or a position of influence because there was some good you wanted to do, by the time you get there, you've forgotten why it was you even made the journey. Getting there becomes an end in itself, and staying there becomes the next goal. And when you do that, you can't possibly be a true public servant. You become

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the servant of your own ambitions.” And I said, in the speech, “If you, my friends here, ever see me heading in that direction, please, for God's sake, come and jerk me up short.”

I've tried over the years not to forget what the game is all about, and not to suffer from the Bridge-on-the-River-Kwai syndrome which seems to affect so many of us.

*Q: The Bridge on the River Kwai was a fictional account of British prisoners of war who were forced to build a bridge that was helping the Japanese. But they got so worked up in getting the bridge put together correctly (and it was quite an engineering feat) that they lost track of the fact that this was aiding the enemy.*

HART: Right, and I think that all too often we lose sight of why it is that we want an input into policy, why we want to achieve positions of influence. Why do we want to be there? If it simply becomes a means of massaging our own egos or having a certain lifestyle, God, there are a lot better ways to get to that.

*Q: Well, now we come back to Santiago, Chile, where you were sent in '71 and you stayed for four years. Could you describe the situation as you saw it? Were you briefed in Washington before you went there, or did you just go directly?*

HART: Went directly from San Jos#. Took my two children. My wife went in one direction, to the States. We were splitting up. She was the stepmother of my two children; I had gotten married again two years after my first wife's death. And my kids and I headed for Santiago.

We arrived on a damp, cool day in April of 1971. Allende had been in power since his inauguration on November 3, 1970, and so there had been a five-month or so span of the Allende government. An awful lot of things had happened, which had caught the attention of the world, about U.S. policy in Chile and whether we were trying to overthrow Allende, and all of this business.

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My job was to be the embassy economist.

The ambassador at that time was Edward Korry, a political appointee, former newspaper journalist, former head of Look magazine before being named as ambassador to Ethiopia in the Kennedy administration. Harry Shlaudeman was the DCM. When I got there, Korry pretty much knew he was going to be leaving. His successor had not been announced, but the handwriting was pretty much on the wall.

The embassy was over in a big office building very near the presidential palace La Moneda. On the other side of the presidential palace was the AID office, which at one time had been one of our largest AID missions in Latin America. It was in the Ministry of Defense building, ironically, and that's where the Economic Section was located, in the AID building, because the Economic Counselor was concurrently AID mission director. It had been Sid Weintraub, who was followed by Dean Hinton, who was followed by Joel Biller. As I mentioned earlier, Joel had been brought over—he had arrived there in February or March from Buenos Aires—to take over and liquidate the AID mission, which we knew was going out of business in Allende's Chile. John Sprott had been sent down to Chile; he had been the economic guy during two or three years there, under Hinton. And the commercial attach# was Cal Berlin. Joel Biller concentrated on AID matters, I was supposed to do the economics, and Cal was supposed to do the commercial work. Joel and I were over in this separate building, and when we arrived in Santiago, we found a really...well, for me, it was a unique embassy situation.

Ed Korry was smarter and more articulate and more energetic than anybody else in the embassy, and he had become famous (or infamous) all over the area, because he would sit down and, about once a day, file some great, deep think-piece about what was going on in Chile and what U.S. policy ought to be, and he would send it to every Latin American mission, "EXDIS" of course. But it got passed around.

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*Q: "EXDIS" is supposed to be exclusive distribution, but once you send that, particularly if it's well written, it gets out.*

HART: I'd been reading Ed Korry's stuff in Costa Rica for six or eight months before I went to Chile; they used to call them "Korrygrams." He was very good, and he was not bound by what he had said the previous day. Ed Korry had a cable on every position that you could possibly take, so that whatever happened, he could say, "See, I told you so." He was a brilliant guy; ambitious, vain, egotistical, irascible, what have you, but a capable fellow. And he had so much more pizzazz than anybody else that he just kind of dominated that embassy in an unhealthy way.

I think we had one case of a guy who had kind of taken exception with him, who had been tossed out. And the lesson that the people on the staff had learned was: Whatever Ed Korry says, you better agree. And not only agree, you better tell him, yes, yes, three bags full.

So when I arrived in this embassy, coming off the Costa Rican experience...

*Q: Particularly having marital problems and being annoyed with Personnel, you certainly couldn't have been in the greatest of moods.*

HART: Well, when I got to Chile, I was in a terrific mood, because I had this big weight off my shoulders. I had the problem of how to deal with this professional problem, and I was out of a marriage which had, for four years, been causing me nothing but pain. My children and I could laugh and relax and be ourselves again, having no longer to deal with a person who had cast a rather heavy shadow over all of our lives, had taken the laughter out of our lives. Suddenly, life was great again. And I discovered that Santiago was a wonderful city, and that Chile was a wonderful country, and that it was not going to be the bad thing that I was afraid it was going to be.

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But anyway, once a week Ed Korry would have a big country-team meeting. All the FSOs and the independent agency heads and what have you would come to this meeting. It would be in the ambassador's office; they had these folding chairs, and there'd be 30 people in the room, anyway. Big meeting. And it was a country-team meeting of a type I'd never attended before, because Ed and Harry would sit in two chairs in the front of the room, and everybody else would be facing toward them, and Ed would go into a monologue. I sat there for the first few weeks listening to these monologues, and even though I was new in Chile, a lot of what he said sounded like total nonsense to me. But everybody would say, "Yes, yes, that's wonderful. Ooh, yes."

*Q: Was there any thrust to what he was saying?*

HART: Well, on one day it'd be one thrust, and on another day it'd be a totally different one.

*Q: Allende was a very controversial figure at that time, so was he going off, I mean, how...*

HART: Well, what Ed was trying to do was he was trying to throw out ideas and get reactions, honest reactions. And even though you disagreed with Ed and you argued with him, he would never say, "You know, you're right. You've got a good point there. I was wrong; you're right." But you would see a cable come out three days later with your arguments in it, if you did them well.

Well, I went through two or three weeks of this, and suddenly one day something unusual happened. Joel Biller, my boss, said, "Mr, Ambassador, I'm sorry, but I just can't go along with what you just said." I don't know whether Ed was talking about the Chilean economy or what, but it was an area in which Joel had a legitimate reason to take exception, and Joel took exception with him. And that gave me enough courage, over the next couple of months, to start taking exception, when I thought it was prudent to.



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And what we found was, the ambassador, when he had some hard choices to make, would call Joel and me over there and we would talk about them, and we found that we really did get some input. Nobody else in the embassy, as far as we could tell, was willing to take this on.

I became very fond of Ed Korry, even though he was a weird dude. And he was destroyed, totally destroyed, by the Chilean experience. He felt betrayed by Teddy Kennedy. He felt like he had been given the blame for a policy which he had never agreed with and had never been a party to determining. And that when the Church hearings on what happened in Chile...

*Q: This was Senator Frank Church's hearings about our role in Chile.*

HART: That's right, and what the role of the U.S. government had been, et cetera. When all that had happened and he had been called to testify, he felt like he'd been just absolutely thrown to the wolves by people he thought were his friends. And he never recovered. Ed Korry's alive today, and I talked to somebody recently who had seen him, and he's still a damaged person as a result of his bitterness and his disillusionment about the blame that he felt was unfairly placed on him for American policy in Chile.

But Ed knew he was short-term. In October of '71, he was replaced by a career diplomat coming out of Guatemala, Nathaniel Davis. Nat Davis came in on October 12 or 13, 1971, and he was ambassador for exactly two years. Those two years were the two years remaining in the Allende administration. And he was replaced, very close to the time of the coup, by a guy who's around here in Washington right now, David Popper, another career person who took over right after the coup from Nat Davis. That particular change of ambassadors was purely circumstantial; I think it was not because anybody said we're going to change ambassadors after the coup. Nat Davis was tapped to come up and be Director General at that time.

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But it was a funny embassy. Ed Korry dominated it in one way, in that he just had more power and more energy and more intellect, and was more articulate than anybody else.

When Nat Davis came, he dominated it in a totally different way. Nat Davis is a terrific guy in many ways, and I have a lot of respect for Nat Davis. I think he's a man of total integrity and commitment, and a harder worker you'll never find. A lot of imagination, I wouldn't say Nat had. A lot of creativity, I don't think Nat had. But Nat is probably the most devoted control freak I've ever seen. You couldn't even get a cable out of there that said "visa's x-ray" without him signing off on it. He signed off on every cable.

*Q: "Visa's x-ray" being just one of these routine cables about a visa procedure.*

HART: He insisted on signing off on every telegram that went out. He insisted that no one in the embassy could have cabinet-level contact with the Chilean government but him. Every political cable got rewritten in the front office. He went over even the most mundane economic-analysis cable with a care that you just couldn't believe. And he did it very well.

But Nat Davis had two guiding principles. (And I say this with respect for Nat Davis, because I do have respect for Nat Davis.) One was that the embassy was never going to speak but with one voice. (Dissent was not Nat Davis's thing; he wasn't a big dissent guy.) And second was, don't take on any battles you can't win.

I was put in charge of the CASP again. I got to Chile in April, and the CASP was due maybe in January. Meanwhile, the Economic Section had moved out of the Ministry of Defense building, because AID was shrinking and what have you. The Economic Section had moved over to the main embassy building late in the Ed Korry time. And I was tapped to do the CASP for Embassy Santiago 1971. I started to work on that, and we met daily in The Tank...

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*Q: The Tank being a secure area, made out of plastic, which, supposedly, couldn't be bugged.*

HART: To discuss what U.S. policy should be toward Chile. For several weeks, the military attach#s, the CIA representative, the ECON, the political, USIA—everybody there who had any kind of even remote reason to have a view on policy and on what the goals and objectives of the U.S. government in relation to Chile should be—were sitting around there.

Finally, after about two weeks of this, I did a really dumb thing. I marched into Harry Shlaudeman's office, and I said, "Harry, it's occurred to me that if we're going to write a paper about what our relationships with the Allende government should be, it would be helpful if we knew what U.S. policy toward Chile is. Could you tell me what U.S. policy toward Chile is?"

And Harry looked at me and, with a total absence of humor, said, "You have no need to know."

*Q: Oh, God.*

HART: So I felt that that pretty well spelled out what the utility of the CASP operation was.

*Q: The question I always ask people I interview, usually early on when we get to a place, is: "What was our policy, or what were American interests in such a country?" With Korry boxing the compass on his ideas, did you feel there was any theme that was coming out?*

HART: Well, you see, there was. There was. Unbeknownst to all but a few people in the embassy, the NSC had issued a decision memorandum saying that our policy toward Chile (and this was Henry Kissinger doing this) should be to try to undermine the viability of the Allende government.

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*Q: This came out about when?*

HART: It came out in early '71.

*Q: So basically you arrived, and this decision was overriding this, but none of you were informed.*

HART: That's right, only a very few people were aware that there had been a Security Council decision on Chile. It was a hollow decision in many ways, because it was more of a pious wish than it was something that was pursued in a coherent way, that we would try to undermine the viability of the Allende government. We cut off new AID programs, but we continued to disburse on the old ones. The Peace Corps stayed on. We started voting against Chile for new loans in the international organizations, but in fact the pipeline was so full that disbursements from international organizations reached new record levels in the first year of the Allende administration. There really wasn't anything that we were going to do, on the economic side at least, that was going to advance the policy that had been laid out in this decision in America.

When I talked about Ed Korry and his ruminations and his getting on every side of an issue, what he was really talking about was: What should U.S. policy be toward Allende?

You had essentially two polar options. One option was: Do everything you can to bring the regime down, whether it be overt or covert. This was essentially the decision that was made in this National Security Council decision memorandum, but was never really coherently implemented.

The other policy option was the one that the CASP, which went out, recommended. And it said, "The best outcome in Chile, for U.S. interests, would be that Salvador Allende comes in here, serves his term as president, and is replaced after that by another democratically elected president. And the U.S. role should be to conduct ourselves in a cool but proper manner toward this government, so that we are not responsible for any major breaches.

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We don't institute any kind of either overt or covert warfare between the two governments. That we're not friends is no secret. That we're not cooperating in many areas and have different ideas is no secret. But that we're plotting to overthrow, or that we're actively engaging in unfriendly acts, should not be our policy." That's what the CASP said.

*Q: And this had the concurrence of the CIA representatives?*

HART: Yes.

*Q: Did you have a feeling that something was going on?*

HART: The CASP said, "This may be the best outcome for U.S. interests, but in fact it's unlikely to happen, simply because it's unlikely that the Allende government will survive four years, because of domestic Chilean dynamics. The way the economy is going, the polarization of the political system is likely to lead to a terrible, crunching upheaval of some kind in Chile long before the four years is out unless Salvador Allende can bring himself to do something which he's said he's not going to do. That is, after a certain number of actions which he believes basically fulfill his promise to his electorate, to say, 'Okay, that's as far as we're going in this administration, and from here on out, this is simply not going to be a confrontational government, taking on the military, the judicial, and the legislative parts of the government.'"

Salvador Allende was in a minority in the Congress, he did not control the judiciary, and his control of the military was, at best, tenuous. So he could have survived only if he said, "Okay, time out, guys. We've nationalized the copper mines. We've done this, that, and the other thing. We've done these social programs. We're going to call a halt for the rest of this term."

But he was a captive of his own left wing. He had a coalition government that was made up of Communists and various brands of Socialists and then the MIR, which was almost a Maoist revolutionary-type organization that was Cuban-oriented to a large degree and

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believed that a revolution to really be valid had to be an armed revolution. The MIR was kind of his paramilitary wing of the political coalition. They and the left wing of the Socialist Party (Allende was a Socialist, not a Communist) were not going to let him back off, and he became a captive of the most extreme element of the coalition, which eventually (and he knew this was happening) eventually drove him to a point where a violent reaction in Chile was inevitable. And, of course, it brought about, for 12 or 15 years after that, a military dictatorship. That was not inevitable; it was circumstance and bad luck that it happened. But that the military was going to throw Allende out of there became inevitable about 18 months into his administration.

*Q: The military in Chile, unlike most places in Latin America, was not an activist military.*

HART: That's right. They had prided themselves on being a professional military.

I'll tell you a story. First of all, I'll start off with the conclusion, and that is, what happened in Chile in the overthrow of Allende was not the product of carefully thought-out and orchestrated U.S. policy. It was a product entirely of internal Chilean struggles and contradictions.

Allende was able to hold on to power as long as he did as a direct result of a bungled kidnapping attempt. There was a right-wing group in Chile called Patria y Libertad, with whom the Agency (CIA) had contacts, with whom the Agency had discussed possible actions to prevent Allende from taking power. But in the final analysis the Agency had decided not to participate in this attempted kidnapping. I think it was in December 1970 that this group went ahead, bungled it, and the commander of the Chilean Army, Rene Schneider, was killed in the bungled attempt. He was succeeded as head of the Chilean Army by a guy named Arturo Pratts. (Most of the Chilean high-ranking military are of German or French background. The military is a place where German and French second sons went for years.) Arturo Pratts, as long as he was head of the Army, because of his viewpoint about the role of the Army, protected Allende.

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Arturo Pratts was a man of great strength and personal courage. I don't know what his real political views were, but he saw his role (and he became minister of defense, also) as a guardian of the constitution, in a way. He felt that the enemies of Allende were trying to press a confrontation to the point where the constitutional fabric would be broken.

There were others who said that Allende had broken the constitutional fabric in many of the things he had done, that that bridge had already been passed, and that all Arturo Pratts was doing was holding the Army in line behind Allende and preventing any reversal of these unconstitutional acts which would be required.

They were saying Pratts was acting to aid and abet unconstitutional actions; Pratts was saying I'm preserving the constitutional fabric of the Chilean political system.

Pressures started to build: there was economic pressure; there was political pressure. There was economic pressure because the country consumed enormous amounts of assets in a binge of consumption in the first year and a half of Allende's regime. This was a conscious attempt by Allende to try to buy a majority vote in the upcoming elections so he could perhaps get the constitution amended, in a plebiscite, as to how the country would be governed. He came probably within one percentage point of getting that majority, when he ran out of assets. And then the economy started to free fall.

There was political pressure because the Supreme Court and the Parliament resisted some of Allende's actions. So he was more and more reduced to finding gimmicks and executive decrees and what have you to nationalize industries, to take over businesses, to close down access of opposition newspapers to newsprint, to put economic pressure on other political opponents, etc.

Finally (and this is really the most important thing), because the MIR and other militant groups in his own coalition, distrusted the military, they created an arms supply and a paramilitary group outside the military. This was supposed to be the vanguard of the

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working class should the confrontation come. And this involved importing enormous amounts of arms and munitions into the country outside of military channels.

It also involved people like Carlos Altamirano, who was the head of the left wing of the Socialist Party. He was a close personal friend of Allende, but ideologically different from Allende, who was basically a center-of-the-road Socialist. The military started getting more and more restive, particularly the Navy and the Air Force, which had different commanders from Pratts, who was the Army commander. Carlos Altamirano went down to Valparaíso, the home naval base of the Chilean Navy, in August of 1973, and made a speech to the noncommissioned officers and the below-the-decks types, saying, "Look, the Chilean Navy is anti-Allende, and there may be a military move against Allende. If there is, you should not obey your officers."

This was probably the final straw. But it was a final straw that could only have happened because of some things that happened in the three preceding months.

*Q: Almost the exact same thing happened in Brazil at one point, I think, this appeal to the enlisted men by an elected leader just before a coup.*

HART: As conditions got more and more tense, as the military became more and more restive, every night in front of General Pratts's house (his house was about two blocks from where I lived), the wives of the field-grade Chilean Army officers would go up and down in front of his house, banging spoons on pots and pans, making a terrible noise and calling Arturo Pratts dirty names for betraying his class and his institution—for betraying the middle class. He was really taking it in the neck, and for betraying the Chilean military in his collaboration with Allende.

It got to the point where, one morning in June of 1973, a lieutenant colonel, the commander of a tank battalion, cranked up his tanks, chugged out with 15 tanks or so in a tank column, went down to the Moneda (the presidential palace), pointed the guns at it, and said, "This is a coup. Surrender!" Everybody kind of stood around wondering



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what was going to happen next. The lieutenant colonel thought he had the armed forces behind him, but when he looked, nobody was there. He sat around there, with everybody kind of looking at each other, for about three or four hours. Then he got back in the tanks and headed for his barracks. But he ran out of gas, so he pulled in an Esso station and said, "Fill it up." He had to fill up the tanks to get them back into the barracks. This was the abortive coup of June 1973.

Then the Chilean military said, you know, what are we going to do with this guy? And there was a lot of back and forth. By that time, Orlando Letelier, who had been Chilean ambassador in Washington during the Allende administration, had come back to take over the portfolio of minister of defense.

General Pratts was still the head of the Army, and he had come down and helped face down this lieutenant colonel, and behaved very heroically, I think, on that June day. Pratts was the hero of the moment for those who supported Allende, because he had faced down this tank battalion.

But Pratts's nerves were getting very raw. And only a couple of weeks after that happened, he was in the back seat of his official car, being driven from his house, out near where I lived, into town, along the main thoroughfare. He and his driver stopped at a stoplight. Alongside them at the stoplight, out in one of the nicer sections of town, was a Chilean lady of a certain age, who looked over and saw it was Pratts, and shot him the finger.

*Q: Gave him an obscene sign.*

HART: Right. And Pratts snapped. He got out of the car, he unlimbered his sidearm, and he shot her Citroën about six times. He emptied his service revolver into her car (not her) in full view of hundreds of commuting Chileans.

From that moment, Pratts was dead meat. He could not survive.

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He could survive all kinds of political things; whether it was right for the Army to take these positions to fill ministries that were not defense. Because, to deflect political pressure, Allende was putting generals and colonels in to run these various government agencies, and a lot of people thought that was a terrible thing. Pratts went along with it. He could get away with that.

But he could not get away with violating the code of ethics of a Chilean Army officer, and shooting that lady's Citroën meant that Pratts was through. He was removed by a conclave of generals as chief of the Chilean Army within a matter of a few days after that. It took just a few days and he was out of there.

Succeeding him as commander of the Chilean Army was a gentleman by the name of Augusto Pinochet.

Now could things have played out differently? Absolutely they could have. Would the end result have been any different? I don't think that there was any way Allende could survive, but you didn't have to have a Pinochet dictatorship for the next...

*Q: Pinochet was a certain type of person who almost preordained what would happen.*

HART: That's right. That was not necessary. But the timing of all this was serendipitous. Everybody thought the coup was going to occur. And the newspaper headlines show it; for weeks before it actually happened, they all talked about "When will the coup occur?" Everybody thought it was going to be on Armed Forces Day, which was September 17 or something like that, when all the armed forces had a big parade in Santiago. They thought that was going to be the day. All these units would be coming, and that would be the time when the military would just swivel their cannon around and say, "Okay, you're out of here, baby."

It came on the 11th; it came a week early. It was bloody. Not that that many people were killed in the original coup attempt, but there were a lot of scores that got settled after that.

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A lot of innocent people died, as well as a lot of people who were in the wrong place at the wrong time.

*Q: As this was developing, how was the embassy tracking this? Did you have any feel for what we were doing, or the CIA, or anything else?*

HART: I was aware of most of what the CIA was doing. I was aware that the CIA was funneling money to the chief opposition newspaper, El Mercurio. I was aware that they were funneling money to some non-Communist labor unions, including the truckers' union. And I was aware that they were funneling money to some radio and television stations, like those run by the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church in Chile had a radio station and a radio/television station. And I thought that that was a legitimate activity for CIA.

*Q: How did you become aware of this?*

HART: Nobody ever sat down and said, "This is what we're doing," but I had enough friends who were in the Agency and what have you, somehow it kind of leaked and seeped. It was never explicit; it was always just kind of figuring these things out. I had access to a lot of the Agency reporting, and I think, probably, over time, you could read between the lines and figure it out.

The Agency did make much of their reporting available. The Agency station chief there was a guy by the name of Earl Warren, who was a first-class officer. He was a first-class officer. And the Agency, in contrast to the State Department, did something when Chile came along that showed that they're a lot smarter than we are about personnel problems: they put their very best people into Chile. They scoured Latin America to find their very best people to put into Chile.

The State Department didn't do that; we just went with the normal personnel system. Stuff happened, and we didn't say, "Look, this is a place we want to have the best in our family."

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Interestingly enough, State Department people in Chile during this period and at the time of the coup, with only one exception, or, you might say, two, came out with their careers tarnished. Whereas the Agency people were all looked upon as heroes. The one person who came out with a career advancement was Harry Shlaudeman. I don't think that was fair.

Some people were tarred with the brush of having participated in the murder of an American citizen. A total lie, but the movie *Missing* and the book *Missing* implicated Fred Purdy; the MILGROUP commander, Ray Davis; Judd Kessler, who was the acting AID director; and Nat Davis as being responsible for the murders of Frank Teruggi and Charles Horman. Total garbage and crap and outrages were turned into instant history by the movie, and that's what the American people believe happened in Chile. It's not what happened in Chile.

The debate that kept going on, in one way or another, in the embassy and in the U.S. government, over time, was: "What should we do about Allende?" And there were a lot of us who said, "Don't do anything. What we do is not effective and it's not necessary. This is a Chilean problem. Chile's of no interest and value to us strategically or in security terms. Even if a Communist regime takes over here, so what? Henry was right, this is a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica." (That's one of the few things he ever said I agreed with.) "Let's just let nature take its course here. That's the best policy." It was that debate versus the activist debate.

In the end, we came out kind of in between. But we were not responsible for what happened; the Chilean dynamics were responsible for what happened. But when history was being written, that's not the way it came out. The U.S. became the key element, the crucial element, the catalyst in what happened in Chile. Chileans know that's not true, but the rest of the world probably doesn't.

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*Q: What happened? Where were you during the coup? How did the coup, from your perspective, hit the embassy? Obviously, everybody was sitting around waiting for the thing.*

HART: Everybody knew the coup was going to happen; it was only a question of when.

*Q: Today is February 9, 1993. Sam, we left off with everyone sitting around waiting for the coup. Was everybody told, "Let's keep checking in" or "Listen to the radio"? Or was it just sort of, "Gee, there's going to be a coup sometime"?*

HART: Well, I don't recall any specific instructions being given to the staff.

Let me back up just a tad. I made a few comments about Nathaniel Davis, who was the ambassador. Lest I be misunderstood about my evaluation of Nat, let me add a few remarks. Nat Davis is a very bright, very dedicated, hard-working Foreign Service officer. He saw his job in Chile as avoiding giving the Allende government some huge excuse for a big public relations campaign against the United States. Of course, given the nature of the relationships at that time, Allende had plenty of ammunition, anyway. But Nat Davis wanted to keep the embassy's skirts clean, and he devoted a lot of care to that. You may argue that that wasn't the right posture or what have you, but that was the posture he was following, and he did it rather skillfully. I think Nat Davis was a totally honorable man, a truthful man, and one who got a terribly bad rap by such things as the movie *Missing*, which in essence put him and several others in the embassy in the position of either being active plotters in the murder of an American citizen, or at least being willing accomplices. And that was a damned lie.

*Q: So how did the coup intrude upon you?*

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HART: The way it unfolded was, the majority of the embassy staff started in to work on the morning of the 11th of September and got within eight or ten blocks of the embassy before they ran into the first roadblocks.

This was a repeat of the aborted coup of June.

*Q: This is the one where the tank commander...*

HART: Where the tank commander had to fill it up at the gas station. We had run into our first roadblocks then, but if you had diplomatic plates, they let you through.

The embassy people made their way into the embassy building, which was almost on the square. It was just a tiny bit off the square that looked onto the presidential palace.

When I parked my car down there that morning and walked around and saw that something really serious was going on, I still didn't know exactly what it was. Although the coup machinery had started to turn about four or five o'clock in the morning, it wasn't until right after we got in the embassy, eight-fifteen, eight-thirty, something like that, that the military came on the radio stations, announced that a coup had occurred, announced that Allende had been removed from office, and called upon him and all of his ministers and all of his supporters to peacefully surrender.

The military were in great evidence in the square in front of the Moneda. I couldn't see the other side of the building, but I'm sure that they were there, too. And the people were filtering in.

At that time, there was not much shooting. The shooting started around nine.

The military kept broadcasting these calls upon Allende to surrender. He was in the presidential palace. He had gotten there from his home when there had been a bungled

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attempt to get him at his home. They had missed him, and he had fled down to the presidential palace. There were a few other people in there, too.

Some of us, in order to get a better view of what was going on at the palace, went up on the rooftop of the embassy building. There was some shooting going on between the troops on the ground and people in the office buildings that were in downtown Santiago. But at that time, there was no shooting at the embassy; otherwise, I would have never been on the roof.

Later on, after repeated calls for Allende to surrender had not been heeded, his supporters in office buildings around the embassy started firing on the embassy. And (cruellest cut of all) one of their main targets was back in the attach# section—they shot out all the air conditioners.

*Q: Oh, God.*

HART: We closed all the drapes, and we put up, where possible, any kind of blockage. We let down what they call the persianas, which are the blinds, these slatlike...

*Q: Like Venetian blinds except going the other way.*

HART: They come down out of the ceiling, and they're wooden. You see them in Europe and in Latin America. We let those down so that at least nobody could see inside. But we took a lot of hits, bullets fired at the embassy from surrounding office buildings by Allende supporters.

*Q: By this time, arms had been distributed?*

HART: To the Allende supporters?

*Q: Supporters and...*

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HART: Well, the Allende supporters had started getting arms as far back as 1971, '72. Cuba shipped some arms in to the MIR, and these were handed out to Allende supporters in the poorer sections of town. And they had brought arms into the government office buildings where they worked and what have you. So there was sniper fire going on between the office buildings and the ground.

Inside the embassy, practically everybody was there. We were tuned to the radio. We had an open phone line to Washington. And we had gotten hold of a guy over in the Carrera Hotel who had a better look at what was going on in the palace than we had, particularly since we couldn't go on the roof anymore because there was too much sniper fire, who had kind of a front-row perch there, looking at what was going on in the front of the Moneda. He was on the phone line telling us, and we were relaying to Washington.

By ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, the fire against the Moneda—small arms and even some tank fire—started to get pretty heavy. But that's a big, heavy building, and there seemed to be no inclination on the part of the Allende people inside to surrender. He was warned that if he didn't surrender, there'd be an air strike against the Moneda.

And, indeed, after a number of delays, right around noontime, three or four Chilean Air Force jets came in and fired rockets into the front of the Moneda. Into the front door of the Moneda, actually, which was a big, heavy, metal-reinforced wooden double door.

Shortly after that, around one o'clock, the troops stormed the palace.

This is where history may never give a final assessment of what happened. Allende was in his office. He was found dead, with a massive wound from an automatic weapon that had been given to him by Fidel Castro.

There are two versions of what happened.



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One version is that he committed suicide, saying that he would never be taken alive, that he would not let himself be subjected to the humiliation of being a prisoner—an ousted president who had been brought down by the military.

The other one is that the military got him and executed him with his own weapon.

I was very close personal friends with Allende's favorite nephew. He had no sons. He had two daughters, but he had no sons. And his favorite nephew told me, shortly after the coup, that his uncle had told him that he knew the coup was coming, but that he would never be taken alive and forced into exile or put into prison or anything like that, that he would kill himself first. This nephew, who was put in charge of the burial arrangements for his uncle (he was taken and buried down in Viña del Mar, as I recall), said that he was convinced, having seen the body and having talked to his uncle beforehand, that his uncle had committed suicide.

It really doesn't make any difference. It really doesn't make any difference. The fact is that he was killed as a result of the coup.

*Q: With the storming of the palace and all, did anything change as far as, say, the embassy?*

HART: Early in the morning, they said, "Everybody go home. Get off the streets. You have an hour to do so," or something like that. That was like at ten o'clock in the morning. Well, there was a hell of a lot of shooting going on. The embassy people stayed put.

Around four o'clock in the afternoon, there was a truce declared. People who were downtown were told to go home, that martial law was in effect, and that there would be a curfew until further notice.

The embassy was divided up into duty teams, duty sections, if you want, the idea being that you would serve 24 hours on and 24 hours off, and people were designated to which

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team they'd be on. I happened to be on Team Two, not on Team One, so I loaded a whole bunch of people into my car, and at four or five o'clock that afternoon, we made our way home. There was still some shooting going on, but it was much reduced from what it had been. I got these people home, and I got home to be with my kids. The expectation was that we would show up the next morning (assuming that the curfew was off at eight or nine o'clock in the morning) and relieve the people who had stayed on overnight.

Wrong. That's not the way it worked out. The curfew stayed in effect 24 hours a day for about 48 hours. So the people who were in the embassy were stuck there not for 24 hours, but for 48 hours before their relief came. But afterwards, we did 24-hour shifts. A dusk-to-dawn curfew remained in effect for a long time. And some form of curfew remained in effect in Chile for years. For years.

*Q: I was in Korea in the late Seventies, and they still had a curfew from twelve o'clock at night until four in the morning. This was left over from the war that ended in 1953.*

HART: Santiago was a dangerous place. And, as I say in this...

*Q: You have a piece of paper that we're going to include in this oral history.*

HART: Right. There was a lot of shooting; a lot of scores were settled. The amazing part to me was not that you had two Americans, Frank Teruggi and Charles Horman, who were killed during the coup, but that there weren't more.

*Q: Could you explain a bit. The reason why at this point I'm asking the question is because you mentioned there was a movie called Missing [based on the book called Missing, by Thomas Hauser], the basic claim of which was that a young, radical student, an American, came down and got messed up in politics and all, supporting Allende, and for some reason or other they decided he had to be killed, and he was killed, and that the embassy colluded in it because he interfered with our policies. I wonder if you could talk a bit about the period just before the coup, and the Americans who arrived there. It was a time of*

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*a lot of demonstrations, student activism against the Vietnam War, against the Nixon administration. This was the thing to do in those days, for students. Did we have a problem down there, and how did we see it, if we did?*

HART: The arrival of Salvador Allende into the presidency of Chile was like a magnet not only to certain groups from the left in the United States, but really from all over the world. In Western Europe it was true, too.

It attracted two basic kinds of people from outside of Chile.

It attracted those who believed that Marxism was the future of the world, and who wanted to see a peaceful, democratically led revolution bring that end to its full flower in Chile. It played to the idealism and the hopes of a generation of people who thought that here was an opening for the world to conduct a wonderful laboratory-type experiment on how to do some social engineering. They wanted to be a part of it, and they came down.

There was another group of people who were also attracted, and these were the revolutionists who believed that Allende provided a wedge.

Allende, however, was essentially a bourgeois, gradualist kind of person. He was not a flaming revolutionary. Here was a guy who, in all of his tastes, in all of his life, had been anything but a flaming revolutionary. He loved wine, women, and song. Fast women and slow horses were his vices.

Salvador Allende put together a coalition which included totally contradictory elements. And one element was essentially a Maoist-Fidelista-type of armed revolutionary. Those people were attracted, too, more of them from Europe and other Latin American countries than from the United States. From the United States, what you got mainly were idealistic young people who wanted to be at least flies on the walls to a wonderful humanistic experience.

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There were maybe ten thousand of these people, all told, in Chile. And of those, maybe one or two thousand were Americans. Maybe. Some of them did, you know, kind of social work in poor neighborhoods, and some of them just kind of drifted into the coffee house, revolutionary-song-singing, feel-good kind of activities; but strictly low level.

Most of these people wanted absolutely nothing to do with the embassy; the embassy was the enemy. Some of them registered with the Consular Section. Many, many did not. Some came and left. I can't remember the numbers exactly (somebody probably has them), but at the time of the coup, the total number of Americans in Chile, excluding official Americans, probably was two or three thousand. And of that number, those associated in some way or another with the Allende regime were two or three hundred.

The embassy, at considerable personal risk to the people actually doing the work, who were mainly consular officers, was able to get all but two of these people out safely, notwithstanding the fact that some of them were engaged in activities which, had they been Chileans, would have gotten them killed. For example, having arms in their house; belonging to groups that were agitating against the armed forces. Those kinds of people got killed, if they were Chileans. Some were taken prisoner and carted off to the football stadium. And the consular officers were able to locate them and get them out. The Chilean officials, whenever we located an American, would give them up to us.

In the cases of Charles Horman and Frank Teruggi, the embassy was not even aware of their existence until after they were dead. They had parents, or relatives of some kind, who had requested information on them. I say the embassy was not aware of their existence, that's not quite true. In the case of Charles Horman, Ray Davis, who was the MILGROUP commander, gave Charles Horman a ride back from Viña del Mar about a day or two after the coup. So he knew that Charles Horman existed, and he knew that Charles Horman's wife existed. So he did know they existed, but the Consular people didn't know this, as far as I'm aware. But Frank Teruggi was not even on the radar scope.

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What probably happened, in the Teruggi and Horman cases, as far as anyone is able to tell (and the only people who really know what happened are the Chilean military or police involved, and they ain't talking), was that Horman and Teruggi were caught up in one of these sweeps that were being made against all kinds of Allende supporters in the days and weeks following the coup, and they got unlucky. Either they mouthed off to some sergeant or lieutenant or captain, some low-level official, or something happened, and they were killed, probably both of them within a week of the coup. Then, as we tried and tried and tried to find out something about them, the Chileans covered it up. It took quite a long time before the bodies were even located, and when the bodies were located, there was still resistance about having autopsies performed and all of these other things.

The thesis of Missing is that Teruggi and Horman knew things about U.S. participation in and planning and perhaps masterminding of the coup which the U.S. government did not want made public, and so they were killed in order to keep their mouths shut. That is total claptrap. Total claptrap.

*Q: We haven't exactly been killing the people who leak everything in the world.*

HART: Horman knew nothing, Teruggi knew nothing, because there was nothing to know, in the sense of saying that the U.S. government was the intellectual author of the coup. Ain't so. It just ain't so. The Chilean military were the intellectual authors of the coup, and the coup would have occurred even if the United States of America didn't exist, for purely Chilean reasons, because the military thought that Allende (a) had violated the constitution, (b) was trying to hand the government over to a group of armed radicals (which was a violation of the constitution), and (c) had put the country in a position where a civil war was about to break out. They considered themselves the ultimate arbiter of the Chilean state, the Chilean body politic, and they stepped in.

Unfortunately, the guy who was the head of it was Augusto Pinochet, who is as mulish and as unbending and as unfeeling... He's not a nice guy, and he's not the guy who should

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have headed that coup. But that was the way history worked out (for reasons that we talked about earlier), and we were stuck with him.

Now the position of the U.S. Embassy when the coup occurred was: This is an act of the Chilean people. In fact, all the polls taken right after the coup showed that the vast majority—something like 65 percent of the Chilean people—approved of what the military did. But what the Chilean people wanted was a fairly rapid return to the democratic process. What they got from Pinochet was 15 years of military rule. The Chilean people did not want that. Some of them did. Some of them did, but always a minority. The vast majority wanted to go back to Chile pre-Allende, with some modifications.

Pinochet set for himself and for his government the task of remaking the Chilean political scene, which had traditionally been one-third center, one-third right, and one-third left. Now all of this was to the left of the spectrum in U.S. politics. The right in Chile was well to the left of the right in the United States. And the center in Chile was to the left of the center in the United States. But within the Chilean context, it had been one-third, one-third, one-third for a long, long time.

The only reason Allende got into power was because the agreement between the center and the right, who had been cooperating and alternating power between themselves, essentially, in the presidency for years and years and years, broke down in the presidential elections of 1970. And the guy who was supposed to roll over from the Christian Democratic Party, which was the center party, and let the right's candidate, Jorge Alessandri, win that year didn't roll over. The Christian Democratic Party was split into factions, and this guy was from the left-wing faction of the Christian Democratic Party and didn't want the conservative fellow, Jorge Alessandri, to get in. So he ran a hard race. And what you essentially got was a three-way tie for the presidency, with Allende having a slight plurality.

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So you got Allende in there as a minority government with no control over the military, no control over the judiciary, and no control over the legislative branch of the government, trying to carry out a major revolution. It was doomed from the start.

The only thing that could have saved it was if Allende had gone part of the way down the road and said, "Okay, that's all I'm going to do. It's a caretaker government for the rest of my time. Any further steps down the road toward Marxist Leninism and Socialism in Chile will have to await another election."

He didn't do it, because his own coalition would have broken apart. And that doomed the Allende regime, because once it passed a certain line, there was no way that the body politic was not going to be broken apart, simply because too many groups were threatened. The majority of the citizenry of Chile felt totally threatened and betrayed by Allende and by the Allende government.

The embassy behaved rather well in all this. I was proud of them. And all they ever got from the Department of State and from Congress was grief. Nat Davis went on to be Director General of the Foreign Service, where he didn't last very long because he got crosswise with people up here. Harry Shlaudeman, who left before the coup, was deputy Assistant Secretary in ARA. Harry, who was probably a player in more of the stuff that came under criticism later than anybody, got out free. He got off. I don't know how, because if you wanted to say what did you know and when did you know it, Harry probably knew as much as anybody, and was an actor in it. I'm not saying that Harry did anything that was illegal in law, but I'm saying that Harry was an artful dodger. After the coup, he went before Congress, in the Church Committee hearings, and testified about stuff in the embassy which was right on the line. Right on the line.

*Q: The coup happened when?*

HART: The coup happened the 11th of September, 1973.

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*Q: And you were there until '75.*

HART: I was there till '75.

*Q: Okay, you were the economic counselor. Let's talk about this first. Were you getting investigating reporters and people coming down all the time?*

HART: Right. Right.

*Q: How did you deal with all this?*

HART: My way of dealing with the press, all of my Foreign Service career, was probably very naive. And that was, we could make whatever ground rules beforehand you want to, but if you ask me a question, if it does not involve classified information, I will give you a straight answer. And I will make a judgement before I get into this with you whether or not I think you're a trustworthy journalist. I'll give you the truth as best I know it and assume that you're professional enough that you won't do a number on me. The only time that I ever had trouble with that was, a Voice of America correspondent—an American citizen, an employee of the U.S. government—screwed me once. Fortunately, nobody heard or read his story which came out, which betrayed a trust I had put in him.

Other than that, that always worked for me. I used to tell people this is what's really going on here. Sometimes they would use it, and sometimes they wouldn't.

As economic and commercial counselor, I found that newspapers like the Washington Post and the New York Times, as well as your mass-media magazines like Time and Newsweek, had no use for economic analysis. Really all they wanted were political quickies. The Washington Post, and I think to a lesser degree but still to some degree the New York Times, had an editorial point of view on what was happening in Chile during the Allende years. When the New York Times correspondent, a guy by the name of Jonathan Randal, was down there during the Allende time, he used to come and see me and say,



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"What's happening?" And I would tell him. Then the story would run, and it would be really 180 degrees from what I'd told him. I considered that I really was pretty well informed about what was going on, and I would say to Jonathan, "Why did you publish this? This is simply wrong."

He'd say, "Well, this is what I got from other sources."

And I'd say, "But you don't say in here anywhere that there's another viewpoint that's held by fairly well-informed people. Why didn't you have that?"

In some cases, he'd say, "I put it in, but the editors took it out." And in other cases, he would say, "That's not what my paper wants to hear."

It kind of soured me, to some degree, on the professionalism of papers, which, up until that time, I thought had more integrity than that. The Washington Post and the New York Times, to me, have never been quite as clean since then.

What was happening in Chile was a Greek tragedy. It was in the cards from the beginning how this thing essentially was going to play, and it was just unfolding.

That's not the story that the American press wanted to tell. The American press wanted to tell a story where events were being moved and influenced and shaped by an American government pulling the strings from Washington, D.C., because that is a commonly held view in academia and in the press. It makes a better story. It's essentially the conspiracy theory of history.

The real way history happens is not that there haven't been conspiracies. There have, but they're the exceptions. Most of the time, shit happens. Shit happens. And in Chile shit happened, but it was not anything that people who understood about Chile did not expect to happen. All that was in question here was exactly how it was going to play out, not how it was going to end.

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So you've got this conspiracy theory going about Chile, and things like Missing, the Church hearings, the mucking around that ITT did, the general atmosphere in the United States and in the world when Chile happened to be the front-burner issue, all led to an interpretation of what went on, which has now become, I think, kind of accepted, about U.S. involvement and U.S. responsibility. Unfortunately, it's not true. That's not what really happened. But I'm afraid that historically that will become the truth.

*Q: What happened after the coup? I mean, the initial settling in. Did you reestablish your ties? Were there people to talk to on the economic side? What were we doing?*

HART: It was an amazing time. The Allende government didn't want anything to do with the American Embassy, by and large, and Nat Davis wouldn't let us deal at the cabinet level, so I spent my time around Chile's best economists, best economic minds, who were all opposition, in Catholic University and in the other academic institutions in Santiago—Catholic University and the University of Chile being the two major economic faculties. These people, mostly but not entirely Christian Democrats, mostly trained in the U.S., who later became known as the Chicago Boys...

*Q: I was going to ask about the Chicago Boys. We're talking about the University of Chicago economic training, which was essentially a rather hard-line conservative but rather successful way of...maybe I'm misstating this.*

HART: No, they were identified with the economic theories of Milton Friedman, essentially. Not all of them were University of Chicago, some were MIT, some were Harvard, some were elsewhere. But there was a fairly significant nucleus of well-trained Chilean economists, mostly in academics, who were kind of the shadow economic team to the Allende government. I spent endless, endless days with these people. We developed a symbiotic relationship wherein I tried to do things and find information for them that they found helpful, and vice versa, because they still had friends inside the government who

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would get information for them if they wanted it, and I had information from time to time that they wanted.

For example, one of these fellows was the chief economic editorial writer for El Mercurio, the leading opposition newspaper. He and I were very, very close personal friends, and we spent endless lunches and dinners and what have you talking about where Chile was going, under Allende, and how it was going to eventually get back into the real world. One day he said to me, "I'm doing this editorial piece that's going to appear in El Mercurio on Central Bank foreign exchange reserves, but I don't have any good numbers. Can you get it for me?" Now this was a guy who had provided me with some very, very good information in the past, so I said, "Sure." Chile was a member of the International Monetary Fund, and I had a Fund report, which was what the Central Bank had reported to them as the reserves, and I gave him the numbers. These numbers are stamped; they have a "Confidential" stamp, or something like that, on the IMF document which contains these numbers. But it's distributed to thousands and thousands of people and hundreds of governments, so it's really not classified information. So I gave it to him, and he used it in an editorial that appeared a couple of days later about what terrible straits the government was in.

That happened over lunch one day, and I went in and I told Nat Davis what I'd done. And he was really upset. He said, "You should never do that kind of thing without consulting with me first."

And I said, "Look, my relationship with this guy is based on trust. He's trusted me, and I trust him. And, Mr. Ambassador, really you're going to have to learn to trust me, too, because I've never ever gotten an ambassador into trouble, by mistake." And, of course, that was a reference to Costa Rica, which is where I was before I went there.

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And that marked kind of a turning point in my relationship with Nat Davis. I think he did come to trust me after that, because I'd never gotten Nat Davis in trouble. I never would have gotten him in trouble.

When the coup occurred, these people, who were all civilians, became, overnight, the economic team for the new government. They took over almost every major economic portfolio. My relationship with them was of a personal nature, but also one of, I think, mutual professional respect, which was unique in my experience. When you have been friendly to somebody when they were in the wilderness, you are going to have a special relationship. For the remainder of the time that I was in Chile (I left there in April of 1975, so that was 18 months after the coup), there was nothing that I wanted to know or wanted to find out about economic affairs that I couldn't have in ten minutes by making a phone call. It was unique in my experience.

I became known as a friend of Chile, in part because, before the coup, when everybody knew it was coming, I had put together an aid package for Chile (which involved mainly PL 480, but some CCC credits and what have you), saying, "When the coup comes, we need to have a package ready to give to Washington, so we can get quick approval, because people are hungry here. They don't have anything in the larder; the cupboard is bare. And if we can't get some food aid in here quickly, people are going to be in bad shape."

And my strategy was the following: If we can get enough economic aid into Chile early enough, it will give the new government options on how they choose to govern during a very difficult period, which if they don't have, will mean that the screws will be very, very tight. If they have a little economic breathing space, they won't feel like they've got to keep the political lid bolted down because the economic conditions are so bad. If you can make the economics conditions at least tolerable, then the political flexibility is thereby increased. That was the strategy.

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And we pumped into Chile about two hundred to two hundred and fifty million dollars a year for two years, with the idea that here is a gesture of goodwill from the people of the United States, in the hopes that you will use it wisely to alleviate human suffering here and to move as quickly as possible back into the democratic mode.

It became rather clear, after six to eight months, that that was not where the Chilean government was going—not because the civilian economic advisors didn't want it to go there, but because Augusto Pinochet and the people he chose to put around him had decided they were going to do a major transformation of the Chilean body politic, which was going to eliminate the left out of the three-way split. They were going to eliminate that left one-third, in one way or another.

This in many cases resulted in human-rights abuses, and certainly in civil-rights abuses of all kinds. Time and time and time again I went to my civilian friends, and sometimes to the junta member who was in charge of economic affairs, the head of the Navy, a guy by the name of Merino, and I'd say to him, "You know, this has really caused us big problems. If you can't move the government away from these types of abuses, we're not going to be able to help you much longer. I want you to know that time is running out, and the goodwill of the United States is running out, because of your behavior—the murders, the detentions, the disappearances, those kinds of things."

In most cases, they denied that it even happened. But slowly, slowly, slowly, everybody had to admit that some of it was happening, even if everything wasn't happening. And I would go to them (this would be like the Minister of the Economy), and I'd say, "Are you aware that last night, my friend, the military showed up at this labor leader's house, pulled him out into the yard, and, in front of his family, executed him there? Are you aware of that?"

"No, no, it couldn't happen."

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I said, "It did happen. We have it from eye witnesses that it happened last night."

It took a long time for these people to ever come to terms with themselves to admit that this happened. Over time, these civilians tended to move out of the government and to be replaced by others who had the stomach for it.

There was a man who was made the so-called economic czar, whom I did not know at the time of the coup, but with whom I came to be on very close terms, and for whom I had enormous admiration. His name was Orlando Saez, and he fought a fierce battle against Pinochet on the issues both of economic policy—trying to make it less draconian—and of the political policies that were followed. He lost, he was removed, and that was part of the Chilean tragedy.

They had a chance to move in one direction. Our aid was intended to help them move in that direction. But they chose not to make that move. And so, after two years, American aid was ended. And we, for the next ten years or so, were openly and hostilely critical of the Pinochet regime.

*Q: The Nixon administration and Kissinger had seen this as an East-West conflict—we won and the Soviet Union lost in this thing. After the coup, did you get any feeling from Washington of exultation for a while? Was there a change over the time you were there?*

HART: I think immediately after the coup there was some of that. You know, kind of like it wasn't the Super Bowl, but at least it was a playoff game, and our team had won. But it wasn't long after that, of course, that you got deeply in the whole congressional investigation by the Church Committee of what had happened in Chile.

*Q: Were Senator Church's hearings going on while you were in Chile?*

HART: Yes, and when I came back, too. I could be wrong on the dates, but I think that the Church Committee stuff started probably while I was in Chile, and continued after I was

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back in the States. That's my best memory of it. I know that they must have continued after I was back, because one day after I was back in the Department, I got a call from Harry Shlaudeman, and he asked me about something that had happened and wanted me to refresh his memory. And he was going up to testify.

*Q: Were you called on to testify?*

HART: No. No. I was not. I wasn't unhappy that I wasn't, but I wouldn't have been unhappy had I been. The Church Committee was misguided, really. They were looking at the wrong things.

*Q: Did you have any feeling, while you were in Chile, particularly after the coup, that, say, the CIA people or our military attach#s were sitting around with smug looks on their faces? Or were they watching this thing and all of a sudden seeing it get beyond where they thought it was going, too?*

HART: Well, my feeling was...now I can't document this; this is just kind of my subjective judgement. During the time between the election of Allende and his taking office, there was an Army attach#, an old Cavalry-type colonel who used to show up at the office in his riding outfit, whom I only saw for a month or so after I got there and he left. He was deeply involved in negotiations with the military about what they were going to do about Allende, and was on the margin, at least, of the whole question about the attempt to kidnap Rene Schneider, the chief of the Chilean Army—the attempt that resulted in Rene Schneider's murder because he resisted the kidnap attempt. This colonel was involved. After that, it is my impression that the military attach#s did not play an important role, and neither did the MILGROUP.

The CIA, in the period that I was in Chile, was the major player. But as far as I'm aware (I think I mentioned this last time on the tape), they did essentially three things. They helped subsidize and keep going El Mercurio, the opposition newspaper. They gave some money to television and radio stations. And they gave some money to some non-Communist labor

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organizations, including, although it wasn't exactly a labor organization, it was more in terms of a syndicate, the truckers. These were not only truck drivers, many of them were independent truck owners and operators. The truckers were involved in a strike just before the coup which had really had a lot of effect; it kind of brought the economy to a halt. But the economy was damned near at a halt, anyway. The truckers's strike was a toughie, and there was some CIA money in that.

What else were they doing? Well, they were collecting information. You know, if you'd say, "Gee, I surely would like to get my hands on a certain piece of information," once in a while they might turn something up. But I tell you, most of what they got was crap. I had better sources on most stuff than they did. When it came down to whose information on economic matters was better, stuff that I had gotten through my economic buddies, I think, the vast majority of times, was more reliable, because usually the people who were getting stuff for them didn't understand anything about economics, and the Agency did not have anybody who was well versed in economic matters there.

But I must say this: they had some very, very high-quality people. They assigned their best people to Chile, out of the whole Latin American pool that they had, when Allende came in.

The State Department didn't do the same thing. We don't seem to do that. Our personnel system has a life of its own, you know. We don't collect high-quality people in crisis slots and assign them to the embassies, the way some other agencies do. CIA was the only one who did it in Chile.

When it was all over, you had a lot of tarnished reputations. Fred Purdy, who was the consul, did a terrific job, I thought, and at considerable personal risk to himself. Running around the streets of Santiago, trying to look after American citizens who were in some kind of trouble or another, and getting shot at, is dangerous. I think Fred and some of his vice consuls did a terrific job. I think that the Department of State, in its usual cowardly way, let them hang out there and twist slowly in the wind when people made accusations



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against them. I never saw the Department of State ever really take on, for example, the basic premise of Missing. Where were they? It was up to the people who had had their reputations besmirched by this to bring a lawsuit. I tried to get the American Foreign Service Association to contribute some money and to join in the lawsuits. No way, AFSA wasn't going to sully its purity with such things. And, hell, I was on the board of AFSA at the time. No, they wouldn't touch it.

*Q: How did you feel about the economy of Chile when you left, about 18 months after the coup?*

HART: Well, I thought that the economic measures that were adopted were too draconian. And I tried to tell my friends who were in policy positions, "Look, too much of the pain is being put on the lowest economic class." The lowest economic class was taking too much of a hit. Unemployment was way up, prices went way up, et cetera, and they were in a terribly bad way.

The middle class and the upper class suddenly found themselves in heaven. For example, the house I rented, and I could have bought for probably \$35,000 during the Allende time, overnight was worth half a million dollars. Overnight. Right after the coup. People who had things that they had collected before and during the Allende time, and who had become poor as the Allende policies hit hard on the middle class, suddenly found themselves at least partially restored. They were able to buy from the Chilean government, at bargain-basement prices, businesses that had been taken over by Allende. There were tremendous economic opportunities again for the wealthy people.

The poor people really got squeezed. And I said to my economic friends, "Don't squeeze them so hard."

And they were saying, "We're going to do this for a very short time. Don't worry about it. We'll take care of them. This is the only way we can go." And they went.

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The policies were effective. There was no economic miracle involved here; the policies that they followed were very predictable, and they produced the expected results. It was a question of degrees here. I felt that they were harsher than they needed to be to achieve the desired results.

After about two or three years, the policies were continued and maybe even tightened down further. And that's where a mistake started, because conditions had changed enough by then that really what was needed was a different set of policies. But Pinochet, once you'd taught him one set of policies and he became convinced of it, those were his policies for life, baby. You couldn't get him to change. So he continued a very, very tight monetary policy, an extremely tight monetary policy, for about five years too long. And it almost brought Chile to its knees about 1980-81. It almost brought Chile to its knees at that time, because they were pursuing a policy that was very destructive in terms of Chilean businesses.

Most of these people with whom I was friends were out of the government within three years, so they weren't around for the nonsense that passed for Chilean economic policy in the period from '77 to '80.

*Q: What did you do when you came back to the State Department in '75?*

HART: I came back to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research as the deputy director of the Economic Research Office.

*Q: Which meant what?*

HART: Well, the Department of State has always had, at best, a sometimes relationship with the subject of economics, and I was considered one of the economic practitioners around who could talk both practical economics and theoretical economics. What I really wanted to do was be a DCM, and I couldn't get a DCM job. First of all, the Department wasn't giving economic officers, by and large, DCM jobs. And second, I was a single

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person. I was told by several ambassadors who were looking for DCMs that single people need not apply.

*Q: Would you explain, for the tape, why they wanted a married officer.*

HART: They wanted a spouse, because the DCM's spouse took on all the crap that the ambassador's wife didn't want to do. They wanted a twofer, and with me, they only got a "onefer."

*Q: Two people for one is a twofer.*

HART: If you were a bachelor, you need not apply for a DCM job, with a lot of ambassadors.

Anyway, I couldn't get a DCM job, so I came back and I was the deputy director of Economic Research.

At that time, the Department was in one of its periodic spasms of enthusiasm for economics, and they were going to build up this office. "Build up" is kind of a funny term, because at that time there were 32 officers in the Office of Economic Research. Thirty-two.

*Q: Good God.*

HART: I was the deputy director, and there were like four or five people in the office who made more than I did. They had a lot of FSR Twos and Ones around there, some of whom had been there for a while, and some of whom had been hired to beef up this office and give State a better economic-analysis capability, because the competition, CIA, in the early '70s, had started to devote a very large dollop of resources to the economic-analysis field, and had kind of established a hegemony on economic analysis. State decided that if they were going to have more say-so about what went on in economic policy, they'd better beef up their economic-research capability. And so I was made the deputy director.

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The director was a guy by the name of Lawrence Kennon. Larry Kennon, who had come out of India. I was there for six weeks or so before Larry arrived.

The office director and deputy director jobs had been revolving doors for people who were on their way out of the Foreign Service—kind of a place to stop and look for what you were going to do later, and not worry too much about what got produced there. The office was in pretty bad shape, and the leadership in INR said, “Look, start working on shaping this thing up even before the office director gets here.” So I took some measures before he got there which I thought would help, measures which, when Larry Kennon arrived and said, “Mirror, mirror, on the wall,” Larry didn't particularly appreciate. I had no choice; I was ordered to do it, but he considered that I had kind of usurped some of his prerogatives. That was not my intention, but it took a while for Larry and me to work our way through that. But we did.

It was a large office there, and out of the 32 officers, we had about four or five good producers, and so we produced some fairly good economic analyses over the next two years. Not that it ever did any particular good, because nobody paid any attention to it.

Hal Saunders, who at that time was the director of INR, was not an economic thinker. He was a very fine human being and a wonderful gentleman, but he was an acolyte in Henry Kissinger's court (and by that time Kissinger was secretary of state). Hal Saunders would come back from staff meetings with the secretary and say, “The secretary wants the answer to such and such question.”

And Larry Kennon would say, “That's the wrong question.”

And Hal Saunders would say, “But that's the question the Secretary wants answered.”

The question might be: How do we use economic strength to force the Soviets to do something in the Middle East? What economic levers do we have to force the Soviets to do something on the political side?

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And Larry would say, "That's the wrong question."

And then the argument would be about what the question ought to be, rather than what Larry should have done. He should have acted like he was going to answer that question, but really answer the right question. Larry wasn't quite up to doing it that way.

So, before long, the Office of Economic Research got dealt out of everything, anyway. So we were sitting around there playing pocket pool, by and large.

And that's when I got involved in AFSA—the way to vent a few unused elements of energy.

*Q: Why don't we talk a little about this. AFSA being the American Foreign Service Association, which was basically the union. It's gone through a whole series of metamorphoses, back and forth between being sort of an old-boys' club and being a rather radical group.*

HART: I would say, radical group, it never was.

*Q: Well, for its time. During the Tom Boyatt period.*

HART: Boyatt was never a radical. Of course, you had Lannon Walker and the so-called young Turks. Maybe, in a State Department context, you could say that anybody who says that the State Department should have something resembling a labor union is a radical.

*Q: That's what I'm saying, because prior to that, it had been sort of a very comfortable...*

HART: Well, it was a professional organization. That's all it was. It became something more than a professional organization not because anybody within State thought that was a wonderful thing to do, but because there was an executive order signed saying that

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in the federal government, each federal agency was to choose an exclusive bargaining representative.

*Q: This was in...*

HART: In the Nixon administration. That's right, a very, very radical change in U.S. government. It was an executive order saying there will be a bargaining agent chosen in each federal government agency. And the struggle became between AFSA and AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees), a part of the AFL/CIO. The more conservative people were AFSA in this fight; AFGE being a more traditional trade-union type of organization. AFSA was trying to change from being a totally professional organization to some kind of hybrid mixture of trade-union activities and professionalism—something that has always created internal tensions and conflicts, and probably always will. I think that AFSA has to refight and rethink that role periodically.

*Q: You were on the board what, about '76, '77ish?*

HART: Yeah, I guess it was '76-77. And that was one of the low points in AFSA's history, because in the '75 election (and these elections were for two-year terms), a slate headed by a Foreign Service officer who had been selected out, named John Hemenway, won no seats on the board of directors, but Hemenway himself was elected president of AFSA. And John Hemenway set about to even his score with the State Department and with the Foreign Service through his presidency in AFSA. I think honest people might differ on whether or not John Hemenway was selected out of the Foreign Service because he didn't perform his duties adequately, or because of personality conflicts and his political beliefs, which were extreme right wing and which he tried to make into policy. People might have real disagreements about that, but I don't think that any person who saw Hemenway operate, and saw some of the things that he did, would defend what he tried to do once he got into the AFSA presidency, which was to get even with the Foreign Service and with the professionals in it for what he considered were injustices to himself. What he tried to

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do was to destroy the professional Foreign Service. He said, "That group has rejected me as being unworthy. The way to get even is to essentially change the State Department into Civil Service." What John was really trying to do in AFSA was to hand the leadership over to AFGE, and to eliminate the career Foreign Service as a separate career system within the government. Because, you see, under the Civil Service, he would have never been selected out.

*Q: I think it's interesting. How did the board respond? Looking at it from the outside, I had the impression that we had a raving maniac as the head of our association. The feeling was (and I think it was rather general) that this guy was paranoiac.*

HART: The other day somebody asked me, "Was John Hemenway crazy?"

And the answer was, "Yes, he was crazy." He had been driven by what had happened to him, and his perception of what had happened, to craziness.

There's a joke in Spanish that I'll use up some more of your tape to tell. There's this guy driving down the street, somewhere in Latin America, and he has a flat right in front of the insane asylum. It's getting toward dark, and he gets his jack out and he jacks up the car. And he removes the lug nuts from the flat tire, and he gets his spare out, and he puts the lug nuts in the hubcap. And about that time, a car comes swishing down the road, real close to him, hits the hubcap, and throws all the lug nuts over into this high grass. He can't find them. And this guy's watching him out of the insane asylum. The guy who's changing the tire starts to walk away, and the guy from the insane asylum says, "Uh, uh, where you going, buddy?"

And he says, "There's a service station a mile back down the road. I'm going down there to get some lug nuts to replace."

And he says, "Uh, uh, uh, no need to do that. All you do is, uh, you remove one from each of the other three tires, and you put them on there, and you can drive."

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And the guy says, "You know, that's really wonderful. And coming from you, I find it particularly amazing that you should be in there and you should have this kind of solution."

And the guy says, "Uh, I'm here because I'm crazy, not because I'm a shithead."

Well, John Hemenway was both. In Spanish, it's *estoy aqui por ser loco, no por ser huevon*. Huevon is a Spanish slang word which I've translated to shithead. John Hemenway was crazy. He was also a shithead. But he was also very clever, and he could manipulate parliamentary procedures and what have you, and turn the system inside out.

I was asked to come on the board, to replace somebody who had resigned because...I don't know, maybe I'm making this up, but John Hemenway had physically intimidated a lot of the board members.

*Q: Well, this is what I understand. Also, with threats of...*

HART: He actually had struck one of the board members. That happened after I came on. An old fellow, ...retiree, Hemenway had struck him. I sat next to John Hemenway at all board meetings, and tried to fix him with a burning stare, and tried to make clear to him that physical intimidation around there wasn't going to work. These words were never spoken, by me or anybody else, but I think that was probably part of it. What was needed, of course, was teamwork among the board members in order to block John. The main leader of that was a guy named Lars Hydle. Lars was the vice president, and invested a couple of years of his life in helping get rid of John Hemenway. I was asked did I want to be the AFSA president when Hemenway was removed. I was trying to get out of Washington as quickly as possible, so I didn't want to take that on, which would have involved a commitment beyond which I was willing to make.

In the end, Lars became a lightning rod: anything people thought was wrong with AFSA, that was not attributable to Hemenway, was put on Hydle, which was unfair. I felt the thing to do was to make a woman who was on the board, Patricia Wilding, the president after



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Hemenway was removed. And, indeed, she was elected as interim president until the next election took place. Hemenway was removed, of course, by a vote of the membership, who voted about 75-25 to remove John Hemenway. But getting that done consumed a year of the board's time. When it was finally done and we were rid of John Hemenway, there was a huge sigh of relief.

But all this damage had been done to AFSA in the meantime. Among other things, we had lost the USIA constituency to AFGE. Membership had dropped off. The finances were not good, et cetera. And, of course, the total absorption in the Hemenway matter. But the deed was done, and I think that the people who were involved in it deserved a lot of thanks. And the groundwork was laid for AFSA to slowly rebuild its base. Which it has over time, and today it's, I guess, stronger than ever.

Hemenway, crazy man. He had two main allies. One was a guy named John J. Harter, who I understand is now working for AFSA. Believe it or not, he works for AFSA. Somebody told me he was a changed man. He was another wild one. And a woman by the name of Cynthia Thomas. And these people would show up at board meetings and shout obscenities at the board while they were sitting in session, because we had open board meetings. Shout obscenities, personal insults at people.

*Q: Well, John Harter was selected out and has been appealing it ever since, I think. Cynthia Thomas's husband had been selected out, and he committed suicide, and she blamed the Foreign Service for his death.*

HART: All these people really had one aim in mind, and that was to try to destroy the career Foreign Service, because they felt that the system had somehow done them wrong. AFSA's goal was to strengthen the career Foreign Service. So you had a basic conflict there.

Funny enough, Cynthia Thomas eventually joined the Foreign Service, though the back door, because of the cowardice of the State Department Personnel people. She was

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given, first, I think, GS status, then FSR status, and then converted to FSO, for which she was totally unqualified in any way, and, as far as I know, is still on the Foreign Service rolls. That was a buy-off by cowardly management, to try to keep her quiet.

*Q: After having gone from one fire to another, you went to a nice, quiet, comfortable post, Tel Aviv. How did this come about, and what were you doing?*

HART: I had two objectives.

I wanted to get out of Washington, because I didn't like working in Washington. I certainly didn't like the INR job, which had become irrelevant because of the lack of interest of anybody in Kissinger's State Department about economic matters.

And also, I'm an overseas person. You know, people expect, particularly at the senior level, Foreign Service officers to have two different sets of skills, which in some cases are really mutually exclusive.

On the one hand, when you're overseas, you're expected to behave toward the host government, the host country, the host people, as a diplomat, in which you are an interpreter, you are a compromise seeker, you are an honest broker, you are a message carrier. You're a lot of things that involve essentially being warm and fuzzy, keeping your intellectual ethics and integrity and your interpretive and analytical skills going all the time, but being of a personality type that you might call "B."

In Washington, the successful bureaucratic infighter, the successful person who gets things done around Washington, is an entirely different type. You're expected to be an infighter, a nut cutter, a fast maneuverer, a sleight-of-hand artist, and all this stuff, particularly if you're in the State Department, because we frequently come to the battle poorly armed in terms of domestic constituencies and resources, et cetera, if it's a policy battle over, say, trade policy, or something like this. So, in order to get things done in

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Washington, you're really expected to have, if you're a successful bureaucratic operator, a totally different set of skills.

I was more of an overseas person. I wanted a DCM job. And the Department said to me, "Well, maybe, if there's somebody out there who wants a DCM. But we're not encouraging on this. We would like you to take another job as economic/commercial counselor." By this time, I was an FSO Two, and I thought that I'd done that, really, twice, and I really didn't need to do it again. I wanted a DCM's job! Everybody wants a DCM job. I said, "Look, I'll just stay right here until one comes along. But I'm sure that that ought to be within a reasonable time."

Well, unbeknownst to me, things were happening. Sam Lewis had been appointed to Israel, and he had picked as his DCM Dick Viets, out of Romania, I believe. And they were looking for an economic/commercial counselor. This was in the spring of 1977. They'd both decided that, of the choices available to them in the Personnel system, I was the person they wanted. And Carol Laise had told them they could have anybody they wanted.

*Q: She was the director general.*

HART: And so one day I get a phone call, and they said, "Good news, guess what, you're going to Tel Aviv."

I said, "In what job?"

"Econ/Commercial counselor."

I said, "I don't want to go to Tel Aviv. First of all, I've got no interest in going to Israel. Second, I don't want to be economic/commercial counselor again."

And they said, "Sorry, buddy, but that's what you're going to do. We're not asking you at all."

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And I said, "I ain't going to Israel."

So a tug of war started.

I found somebody who wanted me to be his DCM. Somebody I had known for a long time offered me the job as DCM. And I went to Personnel, and I said, "Here, I've got this on my own."

And they said, "You're going nowhere but to Tel Aviv."

That tug of war lasted for about two months. I finally became convinced that they were serious about this, and that if I didn't go to Tel Aviv, I had to stay in Washington. I finally said, "Well, screw it," and I gave up, and I didn't get to be a DCM.

I went to Tel Aviv, where, in rank terms, I was the number-three person in the embassy. I went there under protest. I made it very clear to Sam and Dick that I'd come there under protest, which Dick kind of laughed at. But Sam I don't think ever appreciated the humor of it.

One-third of the time I was there, I was supercontrol officer for presidential, vice presidential, and VIP visits. A third of the time, I was economic/commercial counselor and head of the AID operation. And a third of the time, I was acting DCM. That's the way it worked out.

*Q: You were there from '77 to '80. What was the situation while you were in Israel?*

HART: It was a tumultuous time. You had the whole Camp David thing. You had the first invasion of Lebanon by Israel. And you had the breakdown in the talks with the Palestinians. Those were the three biggest events while I was there.

The lead-up to the Camp David thing? Really, I was always of mixed emotions and of a mixed mind about that. With the full commitment of Jimmy Carter, we were able to

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persuade the Egyptians that if they would make peace with the Israelis, and thereby remove the major military threat to Israel, they would (a) get back the territory that the Israelis had been occupying since 1973, in the Sinai, and (b) start a process whereby Israel would negotiate, in the West Bank and Gaza, some kind of arrangement which would give the Palestinians at least a measure of self-government, and would perhaps, over time, lead to the removal of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. That was the deal which Carter was able to sell to Sadat. There were lots of negotiations leading up to Camp David, but that was the deal that Sadat bought, with a lot of arm-twisting by Jimmy Carter.

Menachem Begin at Camp David wanted very badly to get the Egyptians out of the military equation, for Israeli security, but in essence balked at the idea that Israel, over time, would in any way be committed to withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza. He had some problems giving up the Sinai. There was the hard right-wing faction of his party, led by Yitzhak Shamir and Ariel Sharon, who opposed that. So Begin had to spend some political capital even to give back the Sinai. He in essence said, "That's as much as I can pay." And I think, probably, within party councils, he said, "I will never agree to any meaningful negotiations with the Palestinians about self-rule."

So when the Egyptians made peace with the Israelis and got back the Sinai, and the negotiations with the Egyptians about how the negotiations with the Palestinians were going to take place began, they quickly broke down. Sadat felt betrayed. Begin had no intentions, ever, of seriously negotiating with the Palestinians.

And so the Israelis, I think, got the better part of that bargain. Those of us who were in the embassy watching this, who thought about what was going to happen, feared that this might happen. And we thought that Carter needed to drive a better bargain with Begin about what was going to happen on the Palestinian issue. But he didn't, and so the Israelis got a hell of a good deal out of it.

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Now, in retrospect, you can say the Egyptians did, too, because it took them out of a totally awful political and economic situation where they poured most of their national wealth into an armed forces that couldn't fight very well. It got them out of the Palestinian/Arab box, and let them pursue a foreign policy and a domestic policy which made more sense. So it did free-up Egypt to some degree.

But did Egypt accomplish what they really set out to accomplish? No. They got about half of it. And the Palestinian issue was left there for a later date.

Would the world have been better off had Jimmy Carter not done it? I don't know. Idle speculation. We'll never know.

The fact that the Palestinian issue is still as difficult today as it was then says something about how difficult the problem is. But at least there hasn't been another war.

*Q: Well, tell me, how did you feel about going to Israel? I'm speaking as a Foreign Service officer who never served there. I served in Saudi Arabia—had no great love for the Arab world, and got the hell out of it. But at the same time, I've always felt that Israel has been a little bit of a burr in the saddle in our foreign policy. Here is a small country with no particular interest to us in any real strategic terms, yet it sort of jerks us around because it has not only a very vocal Jewish population, but also supporters of Israel from non-Jewish groups.*

HART: Well, it is the foreign policy area where there is the largest domestic political constituency. No doubt about it. I guess, probably around the turn of the century, around 1900, you could say that the Irish group was similar. You know, where you could get elected mayor of Chicago forever by keeping the British fleet off of Lake Michigan. Don't you remember the...

*Q: Yeah, he said if King George came to Chicago, he'd punch him in the nose.*

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HART: Well, anyway, it was that kind of issue. And it's a very difficult issue for professional Foreign Service officers, because we don't like to be so constrained by domestic political considerations. And I must say, I probably didn't handle it very well, either, because I was an economist, and what I tried to look out for were the interests of the United States, as I saw it, in the economic field. Practically always, in my Foreign Service experience, economic interests were quickly and readily sacrificed by the State Department leadership and the U.S. government leadership for what they considered to be political interests. Whether it be a trade matter or an aid matter or whatever, political interests dominated economic or commercial interests.

You hear a lot of talk today about how a new day has dawned; things are different now. Well, I'd say, show me. I think that the State Department's culture favoring political interests will still be a while disappearing. It will be quite a long time before that proclivity has been changed, the culture has been changed.

I was looking, in Israel, for some way to change U.S. policy and to make it more rational. And I failed. I don't think I moved U.S. policy a millionth of an inch. I don't think I had any impact on U.S. policy during three years in Israel.

*Q: You're talking about economic policy.*

HART: Any kind of policy. Any kind of policy. Ever. And for that reason, I considered my tour in Israel a waste of time.

It was an interesting waste of time. I never worked as hard in my life, ever, as I worked in Israel—60 to 80 hours a week for three years, away from home, in Jerusalem, an enormous amount of time. The strain on family, the strain on health, for everybody, was enormous. Even when nothing was happening, the embassy operated as if we were in a crisis.

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One of the roles I chose for myself was to try to convince Sam Lewis to lighten up, because that was the kind of atmosphere that prevailed there. Sometimes he'd listen to me, and he would lighten up for a little while, but Sam, constitutionally, wasn't able to lighten up for very long at a time.

Israel was a crisis country, and the embassy was a crisis embassy, even when nothing was happening, and even when the influence that the embassy had on what was going on back in Washington was not very much. I can't speak for Sam, because I don't know what went on in Sam's world, but when I was acting DCM and once when I was the charg#, I never saw anything happen from Embassy Tel Aviv that in the long run made any difference.

Now in certain short-term cases, you might argue that that wasn't true.

I had enormous respect for Dick Viets. And part of that respect occurred when Sam was out of the country, Dick was charg#, and I was acting DCM, and we had an incident called the Haifa Road Massacre. A group of Palestinians came ashore along a beach in Israel, captured a bus on the highway between Haifa and Tel Aviv, took the people hostages, ended up in Tel Aviv, surrounded by the Israeli security forces, and there was a shootout in which all the terrorists except for one or two were killed, and a fair number of hostages.

The Israelis used this as a pretext to invade South Lebanon, supposedly to punish the people who had been responsible for this raid. But it ended up with the Israelis establishing a South Lebanon so-called security zone, which was really nothing more than Israeli-occupied territory. You can put any kind of parsley you want to around it, but that's what it is: it's Israeli-occupied territory in Lebanon. You can say, ah, well, there are justifications for this, blah, blah, blah, but that's what it is.

When the Israelis first moved into Lebanon, the sounds out of Washington (this was the Carter White House) were, "We fully understand why you'd want to do this."



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Dick Viets, who understood what was going on, fired off “Eyes-only” cables back to Washington, to the White House and the secretary of state, saying, “This is an abomination. The Israelis have used this Haifa Road massacre as a pretext to do something they had been planning to do all along. And in the process, many, many innocent people in South Lebanon are being killed by the Israeli defense force.” And that was the God's truth. And he said to Washington, “To the extent that the U.S. makes sympathetic noises toward the Israelis on this issue, we are accessories after the fact in what's going on there, which is an abomination.”

This took a lot of guts. And it was effective in at least getting Washington to stop making these very sympathetic noises to the Israelis. It didn't get them out of South Lebanon, where they still are today, but at least it was a courageous stand on the part of an officer who knew that he was taking a lot of personal risk.

That's the kind of behavior that I like to encourage, so, unbeknownst to Dick, I nominated him for AFSA's Christian Herter Award, which was for a senior officer showing unusual professional competence and intellectual courage. And he won it that year.

But when he was back in Washington and he found out that I had nominated him, he never forgave me. He always held it against me; I think he felt like I compromised him in the process.

The embassy in Tel Aviv had multiple faces. I personally had my phone tapped. I was followed, et cetera. Sometimes I'd go from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to deliver a message or ask a question of an Israeli official, and when I walked in the office, he already knew what I was going to ask or what I was going to say to him. We were the primary allies and bankroller of a society that spit in our faces. I kept looking for a way to change that, and, of course, I didn't find it. And I left Israel feeling like I'd wasted three years of my time.

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*Q: What was your impression of Sam Lewis? In my interviews, I've gotten mixed reviews. Obviously, a very strong person. He was in Israel for many years. How would you rate him?*

HART: Well, Sam and I were then and still are today (Sam was over at my house for dinner not long ago) like two porcupines circling each other, because Sam has his agenda, and I have mine, and very seldom do they overlap. I admire Sam's skills. Do I think U.S. foreign-policy interests were particularly advanced by his stewardship? In my view, no, because I think Sam is too apologetic for the Israelis. And I think that while his being more critical of the Israelis, more frank with the Israelis, would probably have shortened his stay in Israel, I don't think that would have been a tragedy, either. I don't know what goes on in Sam's heart of hearts, but it's something different than what goes on in mine.

*Q: Well, one of the things that one gets (again, I'm speaking as someone who's never dealt with the country, except sort of through the folklore) is that anything you send back to Washington, or that comes from Washington, ends up on the Israeli Embassy desk, or that there is tremendous leakage of everything. So it's sort of a fishbowl.*

HART: Absolutely right. The Israeli Foreign Ministry and the intelligence service keep a dossier on every substantive officer in the embassy. Pretty soon you're put in one of the categories that they classify in; friend of Israel, or not friend of Israel. And not friend of Israel means that you're not actively supporting them on everything that they consider to be important. I was asked many times when I was in Israel, "Well, whose side are you on?" (as being the chief economic officer out there).

I said, "I'm on the side of the United States of America. That's where my allegiances are. I'm neither pro-Israeli, nor anti-Israeli. I'm pro-American."

That is interpreted as being anti-Israeli.

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Everything you send back to Washington, no matter how classified, has a very strong chance of finding its way into the Israeli's hands. If you write it, you'll be identified to the Israelis as the author of the piece. And if they don't like it, they go after you, and frequently are successful in having you out of there.

*Q: Was this a pervasive atmosphere when you were there?*

HART: No, they're really usually only interested in the top two or three people. They don't care that much about junior or middle-grade political or economic officers, but they are concerned about the ambassador and the DCM and maybe one additional.

I had very good relations with the Israeli government and what have you, but they knew where I was coming from. Each year, the Israelis made an aid request. The embassy analyzed their aid request, all the numbers and everything, and sent the analysis back to Washington. Every year, I recommended a reduction in aid to Israel. And every year, it was increased, if not in the White House, in the Congress.

*Q: So there was no impact whatsoever.*

HART: That's right.

*Q: Obviously frustrating.*

HART: You ask yourself, "What am I doing this for? Why don't I just forget the exercise?"

In the process, I got to know Israel very well. The Israelis, as individuals, are some of the most stimulating and challenging and interesting people in the world. The Israelis, as groups, are terrible, because the Israeli society is set up in such a way that the most radical element always wins. The most radical element in any Israeli group ends up blackmailing the organization toward their viewpoint. Every Israeli government since the founding of the State of Israel has been a coalition government. And the people who

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are at the fringes of the coalition and who are brought into it usually are single-issue constituencies, and they can focus single-mindedly on what their single interest is. It might be aid to religious schools, or it might be whether or not you can do certain things on the Sabbath. And these people dominate Israeli society by their leverage in coalition government. You get a group of Israelis together to discuss anything, and you'll get a wide spectrum of opinion, but the ones who are on the right, who are for Israeli security or for orthodoxy or what have you, are the ones, in the end, that force the group toward their way, by various means—sometimes it's guilt feelings; sometimes it's parliamentary maneuvering. They are very adept.

My three years in Israel were an experience. I can't say that I'm sorry that I did it, but I can say that I couldn't wait to get out. The day my three years were up, I was on a plane out of there.

*Q: You left in 1980.*

HART: I was there from Bastille Day, '77, to Bastille Day, '80.

When I left, the embassy changed, because Sam Lewis had decided that he didn't want any more economic counselors as number three; he wanted his political counselor to be number three. So instead of having that fairly consistent voice of dissent saying our policy is wrong, the political counselor tends to see his role differently, in supporting the political aims of the ambassador, and as, either wittingly or unwittingly, the handmaiden of the ambassador, in carrying out the ambassador's agenda. I think that you remove a balancing wheel when you do it that way.

*Q: That makes sense. Economists have their own...*

HART: Discipline.

*Q: There they are, and what's in it for us is fairly clear.*

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HART: And so the economic counselor was no longer the number-three person in the embassy. The Economic Section was moved from close proximity to the front office off into a much more distant spot in the embassy, which had both practical and symbolic significance. It just wasn't the same anymore. And that wasn't by accident; that was done with malice aforethought. I think Sam was greatly relieved when I got out of there.

*Q: Then you went back into ARA, the Latin American Bureau.*

HART: I decided that I really had to find a geographic home. I'd always thought that my home was economics, and I could practice that anywhere that the need arose. But I discovered, about that time (it finally dawned on me; I'm a slow learner), that if you aspire to really good, senior-level jobs, you've got to have a regional bureau as your patron. I wanted to be a DCM, and guess what, I only got two offers to be DCM—in Bangladesh and Ceylon. I figured life was too short for that, so I said “no, thank you;” in the end, I went back to Washington. I had gotten a call from Sam Eaton, who at that time was the deputy assistant secretary for South America in the Latin American Bureau, who asked me did I want to be an office director. I said, “Not really. What I want to be is a deputy assistant secretary. When are you leaving?”

And he said, “Well, come on back here and take over the desk of the Andean Office, and maybe something will work out after a little while on that.”

So I returned to Washington in August of '80.

*Q: Today is February 16, 1993, a continuing interview with Sam Hart. Sam, before we start on the regular thing, we finished your time in Tel Aviv, and you had made a comment, off the tape, and I wonder if you could maybe comment a little on it. You said you realized, as you were doing these interviews, you sounded a bit contentious and sort of a rough burr under the Foreign Service saddle. You had some feelings about this.*

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HART: What I said was that I think anyone listening to these tapes would say, "Jesus, that guy is always going around looking for trouble." And I think there's probably an element of truth in that. I didn't look for all the trouble that found me, but when you set yourself up as kind of the resident conscience of an organization which really doesn't have a hell of a lot of conscience, inevitably you're going to get into a lot of pissing matches. And that's the role I chose to play, for one reason or another. I just always said to people, "Now do the right thing and tell the truth." Any organization has trouble with that, the State Department no less than the next one. I tried to do it in a way that would elicit cooperation, but when cooperation didn't come, I was willing to go to the mat. My goal was never any particular position or any particular rank or job. I always thought that the measure of it was, at the end of the day, if you could say, well, I served the public interest, then that's all you wanted out of it. When you have that attitude in a hierarchical organization like the State Department, in which there are so many ambitious and able people sucking up and kicking down, inevitably you're going to have a lot of confrontations.

*Q: Okay, well, let's see if you've gotten confrontation. You came to a nice quiet time; you went to ARA, dealing with Latin American Affairs, and you covered the transition between the Carter and the Reagan administrations. My impression was that there was blood in the halls, in Latin American Affairs particularly.*

HART: Yeah, the Reagan administration behaved very badly.

*Q: But maybe you might say what you did, first.*

HART: Okay. I was recruited by an old acquaintance by the name of Sam Eaton, whom I'd known very slightly previously, who called me when I was in Tel Aviv, saying, "Would you be interested in coming as the office director for the Andean countries" (that's Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia) "when you come back to Washington from Tel Aviv?"

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And I said, "Not really. That's not really what I want. I want your job," which was deputy assistant secretary for South America. But that wasn't available, so I eventually said, "Yes, I'll come." And I went back to Washington.

It was a very large office. We had maybe 12, 14 officers and support staff. And very busy.

I got there in August. The election, of course, was in November. And, I guess, on January the 20th or 21st, everybody who was in the front office, every deputy assistant secretary (and there were a bunch of them, who had been stuck in there, for one reason or another, by the Carter administration) and the assistant secretary, was told to be out of their offices by noontime the next day. And they were. Well, not all of them. There were some career people who didn't move right away. The non-career were all gone. The career people were put on notice, in effect, that they were there just until a replacement could be found.

For example, Sam Eaton stayed on, but Bill Bowdler was tossed out and I don't think ever got over the humiliation and the hurt involved in that, because he felt like he was a career officer who had served Republicans and Democrats well.

But placed as acting assistant secretary was John Bushnell, who had been the senior deputy under Bowdler. Bushnell assumed acting status while they looked for an assistant secretary. It didn't take them that long to find an assistant secretary in Tom Enders, a career officer who at that time was U.S. Ambassador to the EC in Brussels. Tom had to disengage from Brussels, and he had to get in and get confirmed and what have you, so we knew that Bushnell was going to be acting for some time. And it turned out he was acting from January until the middle of June, when Enders got confirmed. So, suddenly the heads had been chopped off of the deputy assistant secretaries, and Bushnell was acting.

It was a unique period in ARA, beginning at that time. Up until then, ARA, like practically every other bureau, had placed the real day-to-day operational responsibilities for management of country relationships in the hands of deputy assistant secretaries. The

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office directors were not what they were originally intended to be, which was the managers for that. When the office director system came in, back in the seventies, I guess, the idea was that you were going to cut out layers. In fact, what you did was establish another layer.

In ARA, starting with the decapitation of the leadership, with the incoming Reagan administration, office directors were given the opportunity to operate the way they had originally been designed: that is, only in cases where there was a major policy issue that probably needed to be taken to the next level above, to the under secretary level, did you even bother to go to the assistant secretary.

I had five countries. Each of the five countries I was dealing with happened to have very good ambassadors in the United States.

*Q: What countries did you have?*

HART: Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. For example, the ambassador of Peru, here, was the vice president of Peru. Every ambassador who was here could pick up the phone and get hold of his president; that's how well wired they were. And I was able to establish, I think, the kind of mutual trust with these five fellows so that we were able to do business with speed and with mutual benefit in a way that really was unique.

It was an important time in Latin America, because the decades of evolution in terms of our relationship with Latin America was starting to bear fruit. We had begun to evolve from total concentration on what we perceived to be national security matters, which had preoccupied us since the beginning of the Second World War, to other things.

The biggest milestone, of course, was the Carter administration's emphasis on human rights. We stopped judging Latin American countries and structuring our relationships with Latin American countries on whether or not whoever happened to be heading those



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countries was an avowed, at least on the surface, anti-Communist. We were looking at other things.

One of the things we were looking at was civil rights and human rights. And another one was how well these countries seemed to be at least moving toward democracy.

I came in at a time where, in the Andean countries, the five countries I mentioned, you had an unprecedented movement toward democratic government. Venezuela had had a democratic government since 1952. Colombia had had a democratic government since the Fifties, too. But in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia, democracy was the exception, not the rule. I arrived in the Andean Office shortly after democratic governments had been established in Peru and Ecuador. I had absolutely nothing to do with it.

In fact, the United States can never say, well, they have democracy in X because we were there. If you have democracy in a country, and if it's going to last any time at all, it's because the citizens of that country finally arrived at the position where they believed that democracy served their interests well.

But in Ecuador, a military regime was replaced by a democratic election in 1980. And in Peru, the same thing had happened in '79.

I arrived in the Andean Office right after a democratically elected government in Bolivia had been overthrown by a military coup, which had been backed by the Argentines. And we had Bolivia in the deep freeze: we had withdrawn our ambassador; we had shut off AID funds; we were doing everything we could to punish them for having overthrown a democratic government.

At the same time, we were encouraging the Peruvians and the Ecuadorians to indeed put the roots of democracy down as deeply as they could, and to behave in ways that would promote the democratic future of the country, instead of in the shortsighted ways that

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political parties and the military and other important players in the political process in Latin America had traditionally behaved.

So I came into a changing situation.

Another part of the landscape at that time was, from '77, '78 onward, in the Latin American Bureau, nobody had really been paying much attention to anyplace in Latin America other than two problems: Cuba was a constant, and the other one was what was happening in Nicaragua. In the early Carter years, it was what to do about Somoza. Then, in '79, the Sandinistas won in Nicaragua, and then it was what to do about the Sandinistas. So when I arrived there, the time of the front office of ARA was probably 75 percent devoted to Nicaragua and the Sandinistas.

And, of course, the focus on the Hill was very much that, too, because you had the attack from the right, led by Senator Jesse Helms (Rep. NC) and others, that was saying, in effect, we had lost Nicaragua; we had sold out Nicaragua; we had turned our backs on this old-time friend and ally, Somoza; and we'd given it to the Communists. And, of course, the domino theory was just about to work again there, as it had in other places (their words); Southeast Asia, for example. Next it would be Costa Rica, and then on to the Canal, and the next thing you know, we'd have the Russian colossus astride the Canal, choking it off and killing the American economy.

Of course, all this was total Goddamn bullshit. But believe me, it struck terror into the heart of the White House and a lot of other people in the State Department—this problem, what to do about Nicaragua.

Again, that freed up those who were not dealing with that to do the best they could with their own resources in dealing with the rest of the hemisphere.

Shortly after I settled in a little bit, I took a trip through three of my countries, and then, not long afterwards, picked up the other two (in fact, I may have gone twice to Peru), trying to

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get to know our embassies, our ambassadors, and trying to meet some of the top players in the local governments. And I, I think, pretty well succeeded in doing that.

When I sat down with Sam Eaton and we discussed what was going on and what the goals of the office should be, there really were three or four things that came up. (And I'll try to remember what they were.) But top of the list was to promote democracy.

I discovered that I finally had the job that probably I was meant to have all my life, that my heart and my mind were in the same place, that the cause was noble and the wherewithal was there, if a little imagination and a little creativity and a little risk-taking were mixed with it, and that there was a chance indeed to do something that one could be proud of having had a hand in.

And that was, to try to take these five countries and to do everything within the power of the United States to see that those that were democratic remained so, and those that were not, moved toward democracy. The only one, when I came in, that was nondemocratic was Bolivia. That was job one.

There were other things on the agenda—the drug problem, because Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia were the three largest countries involved, in one way or another, in the cocaine trade. Colombia, at that time, was probably our number-one foreign supplier of marijuana, also.

The debt problem had not yet arisen, but it came roaring down the pike in '82. It required a great deal of attention because U.S. banks had huge loans that were not being paid.

Not long after I entered the office, we had an eruption of an old, old-time problem, which, on the surface of it, was stupid, but which tended to get in the way, and that was, the Tuna War.

*Q: Oh, my God, yes.*

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HART: Ecuador was seizing U.S. fishing boats that were fishing without licenses, within the 200-mile territorial Sea of Ecuador, for tuna. We had a law that said they were allowed to do that. And if the boats were captured and fined, we had a fund that had been set up by the U.S. Congress to pay the fines and the confiscations and anything else that was involved. When a tuna boat got captured by the Ecuadorians, we paid them off for the economic loss. So we had a basic conflict in Ecuadorian law and American law, which led to international conflict between the two countries.

In Colombia, you had a guerrilla problem, a security problem, and a growing drug problem.

In Venezuela, we had nothing very big. Essentially, in Venezuela, our problem was to keep the Venezuelans working with us constructively on the problems in Central America. Venezuela, at that time, was considered a rich country, because oil prices were pretty high and they were pumping some of their oil money into their foreign policy in trying to promote democracy in other parts of the hemisphere, particularly in Central America. They were working with us on the case of Nicaragua, trying to influence the Sandinistas; in Guatemala, they were providing cheap oil; in Costa Rica, they were providing cheap oil, too. So we were working with the Venezuelans on that.

With the Bolivians, it was how to get rid of the bloody, murderous dictatorship that had taken over from a democratically oriented government.

Ecuador, tuna problems, not much else.

Peru, drug problems and dealing with a very shaky democratic government, shaky in part because the president of Peru, Bela#nde, had been ousted by the military in a coup in 1968. And Bela#nde really had only one objective when he took office again in '80, and that was, to complete his term. He kept making compromises with the military, which were really very unwise, trying to buy them off. And the Soviets were selling a lot of military equipment to Peru. This upset the Pentagon; it upset certain people in the

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State Department. Personally, other than the fact that it was a diversion of much-needed resources into a nonproductive investment in military equipment, I couldn't have cared less. But I was in the minority. I mean, all the Peruvians were doing was buying junk, and it was junk to keep the military happy, and Bela#nde felt that that was the price he had to pay.

Other than that, we didn't have too much going with Peru, until suddenly, in early '81, there was a major border clash between Ecuador and Peru. There had been a long, long dispute over a sector of border between Ecuador and Peru. The Ecuadorian president, a fellow by the name of Rold#s, had authorized the Ecuadorian military to establish an outpost on what the Peruvians considered their territory in the disputed zone. This was high up in the Andean Mountains, where the wango-wango bird couldn't even get. The wango-wango bird said that was too tough up there. It was triple-canopy rain forest on vertical terrain; everything was up and down, nothing was side to side in that terrain. And it would take a patrol of trained people maybe a day to go a kilometer in that terrain; that's how bad it was. The Ecuadorians had an outpost up there, and the Peruvians, by accident, discovered it, and it provoked a border war. And for about a month, things were touch and go. People were talking about an invasion of Ecuador by Peru, because Peru's military was much stronger than Ecuador's.

It fell to the Office of Andean Affairs and our ambassadors in the two countries, Ecuador and Peru, to try...

*Q: Well, we had a treaty arrangement back in the Forties, didn't we?*

HART: You're so smart, Stu, you amaze me. That is absolutely correct. Under the provisions of the Rio Protocol of 1945, we, the Chileans, and the Brazilians had agreed to be the guarantors of a treaty, which was called the Rio Protocol, which supposedly marked that boundary. But it didn't really mark that boundary, because there was, I think, about a

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50-mile stretch where the surveyors had made a mistake. They had used base points and what have you, having to do with where a watershed was, that were in error.

Now this terrain is absolutely worthless; it is not good for anything. And reasonable people could have found a way to deal with this. But we were not working with reasonable people. The Ecuadorians were sure that they had a right to it. The Peruvians were sure that if the Ecuadorians did anything like they did, which was move a military outpost out there, it was a casus belli. So we had a situation where Ecuadorians and Peruvians were shooting at each other. Fortunately, neither one of them could shoot straight. There were strafings and all kinds of stuff going on.

In our role as the only one of the Rio guarantors who had assets to do much about this with, we worked with the Chileans and the Brazilians, and worked through the embassy in Bras#lia, which at that time was under the direction of Robert Sayre, to have meetings and to get everybody involved and try to calm the situation down. Eventually we were able to get both sides to quit running military operations. We tried to establish exactly what was happening on the ground. And we got two helicopters out of Southern Command Panama, with U.S. crews, to go down and to fly reconnaissance missions and to try to assure everybody that invasions weren't about to happen, et cetera.

The Ecuadorians eventually withdrew back to their side of the border. Total killed and wounded was, I think, one or two Ecuadorians killed, and a couple wounded.

The biggest casualties were taken by the United States. We lost a helicopter with a whole crew. The helicopter was never found; lost up in the high part of the Andes. Which was another good example of incompetence of the U.S. military, because here you have helicopters that were operating at 13,000 feet, 15,000 feet, and what do they send down? They send down a crappy, old, single-engine helicopter, the old Huey, instead of sending dual-engine, top-level helicopters that could operate in those altitudes, where you need

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a lot of extra power. We lost a helicopter because of it, and about five crewmen. So we suffered the biggest casualties.

Both sides drew back, but rumblings continued. We were dealing, here in Washington, with the embassies of the two countries, trying to get them separated.

I eventually went down to Ecuador and to Peru, to see if I couldn't act on the ground as an honest broker, and to float something with Bela#nde. I must say, I had no authorization to do this at all. First, I went to Quito, and I sat down with the foreign minister there, and I said, "What could you live with in terms of a final settlement of this thing?"

And he said, "If the Peruvians will make even a symbolic gesture to us, I think this government" (which was now under the leadership of Oswaldo Hurtado, the vice president who succeeded Rold#s who died in an airplane crash), "I believe Hurtado can accept and sell something that has even a small sweetening in it for the Ecuadorians, other than the line that the Peruvians claimed."

And I said, "Well, how much is small?"

Well, he wouldn't say, but I got it very much in my mind that a few hundred square kilometers of totally worthless terrain would be enough.

So I went to Peru and sat down with Bela#nde, and told him, "Architecto," (which he liked to be called, architect) "they tell me in Ecuador, not for publication, just between us, they tell me in Ecuador that if you can move your country to compromise even the teeniest little bit on this, we could settle this thing once and for all. How about it?"

And he said, "No way, no how. If I ever gave, not one square kilometer, but one square centimeter of what my military believes is Peruvian territory, they would throw me out of office again before the cock crows the next morning. So I can't do a thing on this."

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And he didn't.

But no big deal, we only had one or two other scuffles on the border after that.

The Ecuadorians were to blame for the border war in the first place, because Rold#s, who was a stupid guy, authorized the Ecuadorian military to put that observation post, or whatever it was, over on what the Peruvians considered their side of the line, and that triggered the whole thing.

The Ecuadorians never did that again, but it convinced me of one thing, and that was, the U.S. would provide a real service to those two countries and the region if we could somehow divert their military mission away from each other and toward internal development. (More on that later.)

Here you had two militaries in very poor countries, who had histories of taking over power from civilian governments, who absorbed enormous amounts of the national budget to buy hardware as a means of fighting a war with each other should the necessity arise. Their military missions in each were to fight each other over this stupid damn piece of crap up in the Andes. The result was a diversion of resources and a coup-minded military, in both places.

Of course, this was not all just politics, either (if you want to say "just politics"). The large arms purchases were used by both the Peruvian military and the Ecuadorian military as the foundation of their retirement funds, because every major military purchase had an element in it of bribes to the general officers then on duty, so that they could retire in a style that they would like to get accustomed to. For every ten-million-dollar purchase of, let's say, aircraft or whatever, ten to twenty percent of that was in kickbacks to the military. That's the way the system worked.



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So I thought it would be a nice thing if we could get them away from that. It might be a step forward for democracy.

The border war finally simmered down, not really to bubble up again (at least it hasn't, meanwhile). Democracy survived in both places, obviously.

We got pretty good marks for being honest brokers. The reason I knew was because both sides screamed that we were favoring the other. We had two excellent people here in Washington working with us: Fernando Schwalb, the vice president of Peru and ambassador to Washington; and a guy by the name of Lalo Crespo, who was the Ecuadorian ambassador here and who was very closely wired to Oswaldo Hurtado, who was president. So we resolved that.

People in the Andean Office worked awfully hard over two or three months. I don't think I got a full night's sleep for about two months, because, usually in the middle of the night, I'd get a call from Ed Corr, who was our ambassador in Peru, who would be complaining about how we were being unfair to the Peruvians. Most nights I'd get a call from Ed about one o'clock in the morning. He'd just come from a dinner party or something, and he wanted to talk to me about it.

The most serious problem we had in the early days of the Reagan administration was not with Ecuador and Peru, however, although that boiled up at that time. The most serious problem we had, and probably the most important contribution I made to the Foreign Service and the State Department during my career, involved the most unlikely thing, and that is, the insignificant, totally debaucherous country of Bolivia. But something more important than Bolivia was at stake.

As I mentioned before, Bolivia had been put in the diplomatic deep freeze because of the coup by the military in June of 1980, which threw out the democratically elected president, Lydia Guiler. Chauvinistic Bolivia had a woman president, Lydia Guiler. She was thrown

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out by a general and his followers. The general's name was Garcia Mesa. Garcia Mesa had as one of his primary lieutenants a colonel in the military, who he made his Minister of Interior, by the name of Lucho Arce Gomez. They established in Bolivia, after the coup, a government-operated drug enterprise that engaged in murder, and kleptocracy on a scale never before practiced even in Bolivia (one of its main claims to fame was how people stole everything). About as clear cut a case of the worst kind of government a country could have was Bolivia in 1980.

Our policy, notwithstanding the fact that Garcia Mesa and all his guys were avowed anti-Communists, and our MAAG down there, our Military Advisory Group, and the attach#s were all pleading the cases of the Bolivian military, the State Department and the White House decided these were bad guys. They were to be put into cold storage, and pressure was to be brought every way we could to get rid of these people and get a return to a democratic government. That was the Carter policy.

Not everybody agreed with that policy. You may recall that during the 1980 presidential campaign, Jeane Kirkpatrick wrote an article for, I think, Commentary magazine, in which she drew the distinction between authoritarian regimes and totalitarian regimes.

She said an authoritarian regime is one that, while it may not be democratic, is at least pro-U.S. and is from the right—the type of regime that the Carter Administration had been beating up on in Latin America during the previous four years. Example: Argentina. Example: Chile. Jeane Kirkpatrick's thesis was: we should not be so critical of those regimes, because after all, they were anti-Communist.

Then there were the totalitarian regimes. Although she didn't say so, what she really meant was that these were regimes of the left who behaved very much the same way, but were not our friends. And she said, come down with both feet on those people, but be nicer to these people who want to be our friends. That was her thesis.

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*Q: And she now had a cabinet seat and was a part of the...*

HART: After the Reagan victory in the election, you could hear all the Latin American sphincters, in unison, sucking wind. They all just tightened up, because they could see, here come Jeane Kirkpatrick and Jesse Helms and people of that mindset. The Cold Warriors were going to turn back the clock, and this push for human rights and democracy and what have you that was starting to bear a little fruit in Latin America was going to be reversed in the Reagan administration. And the U.S., which had been encouraging democratic forces, would no longer have any interest in doing so.

That was a widely held fear in Latin America, particularly widely held in the Andean countries, of which four of the five were democratic, and among the few democratic governments in the hemisphere at that time. When you look at Latin America in 1980, the only countries that could really claim democratic governments were the four Andean countries plus Costa Rica. That was your list, in all of South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. That was it, in 1980. And the democratic forces were really scared to death that there was going to be a major policy reversal in the Reagan administration.

When Bushnell took over as acting assistant secretary, he was well aware, because he had been the principal deputy, of why our Bolivian policy was what it was. Bushnell was under fire from Jesse Helms because he had been the point man, to some degree, of our policy toward Nicaragua, which Jesse Helms felt had been too sympathetic to the Sandinistas.

We also had problems with our policy of supplying military equipment to the Guatemalan military to fight a guerrilla war they were fighting with leftist insurgents there. Because of human rights violations and what have you, it was questionable whether the military aid the U.S. was providing was the right thing to do and whether or not it met the requirements of U.S. law about human rights violations.

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There were all kinds of things like that. You had a political divide between the people who were of the Carter mind and the people who were of the Cold War mind.

Bushnell had been identified with the Carter policy while Carter was in, but when Reagan came in, Bushnell did a quick 180 and became the fiercest Cold Warrior that you could find in the Carter State Department. And in his conversations with the new secretary of state, Al Haig, Bushnell was told that Al Haig thought that our policy toward Bolivia was wrong and that he wanted to normalize relations. This was probably early February 1981.

*Q: They came in on the 20th of January '81, so...*

HART: Within a matter of a few weeks. Bushnell came down and said, "The secretary wants to change policy and wants to name an ambassador to Bolivia."

Now Sam Eaton was still hanging around, although his days were numbered. He was going to have to retire. There was no other front office up there—Bushnell was acting; Enders hadn't arrived on the scene—so really the management of relations with Bolivia, I felt, was kind of something that I had to stand up and be counted about. While I had not been the architect of the policy, which was to squeeze the military government as much as you could in hopes that you could get rid of them, I felt that that was the only honorable and reasonable policy for the U.S. to follow. Sam Eaton and I sat down and decided, over a period of days, that we were going to fight this baby to the last drop of blood, using whatever means we could find to try to keep Al Haig from doing what Al Haig had decided he wanted to do, which was to throw the policy of support for democracy out the window, and to go back to something approaching a Cold War realpolitik in Latin America.

I found no justification whatsoever for pursuing that type of policy in Latin America. Bolivia has zero security interests for the United States, zero. All that was involved there was essentially the kinds of signals we wanted to send the rest of Latin America about what

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kind of government we... and what kind of values we had as a people in our country. We had nothing at stake in Bolivia in the realpolitik sense.

Al Haig was taking this position, I believe, not because he cared two pins about Bolivia, but because he was already in a fight with Jeane Kirkpatrick and the Hill. Jesse Helms was the number-two person on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, behind Chuck Percy, the chairman. The Republicans controlled the Senate, you'll recall, after the 1980 election. And Al Haig had a lot of problems, a lot of fish to fry, with them on other issues, and he felt this was a throwaway. Jeane Kirkpatrick, who was up in the U.N., and he were like two dogs bristling at each other from the very start, because they saw each other as power rivals. And I think he thought this was a throwaway.

He picked some buddy of his he wanted to go to Bolivia, a retired three-star Army general named Gordon Summers, offered it to him, but the guy was not interested. Another time, he talked to Ted Briggs about becoming ambassador to Bolivia. Haig wanted to do it, but he couldn't find anybody right off to nominate.

It gave those of us who felt that the policy was a mistake a little time to mobilize and to get moving. When Bushnell told us that the secretary was going to change the policy on Bolivia, Eaton and I...and I will say 'Eaton and I,' because sometimes Eaton was involved, too, and I maybe just don't remember. My memory is not as precise on that as it might be, but Eaton deserves full credit. We said to Bushnell, "He can't do this unilaterally, because the position on Bolivia was a result of a SIG (Senior Interdepartmental Group) decision memorandum. In order to change that, you've got to have another meeting of the SIG, and you've got to bring other people into this." A SIG is kind of a level below a National Security Council type of decision-making process.

Of course, if Haig had just gone ahead, it would have been done. We had only a procedural defense. I mean, if he had done it, he'd have done it. If the White House had decided to appoint an ambassador, the SIG would have had no meaning whatsoever.

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But we were able to raise a little procedural roadblock. And Bushnell said, "Okay, we'll have a SIG, and we'll change it."

Well, we had a SIG, and, with a little pre-lobbying, we were able to get everybody to agree that the policy toward Bolivia was indeed the right policy to continue and no change was warranted.

*Q: You said 'a little pre-lobbying,' what did you do?*

HART: Well, the SIG was composed of State Department representatives out of the regional bureaus and a couple of other places, the Pentagon, DIA, CIA, and...anyplace else?

*Q: Treasury?*

HART: I'm not sure Treasury was involved.

*Q: Drug Enforcement...*

HART: DEA, yes, and maybe AID, I'm not sure. The foreign affairs agencies involved in Bolivia. And there were half a dozen or so agencies involved. So you'd talk to the guy who was representing the Latin American division of CIA. As you called to invite him to the meeting, you'd discuss it with him, so you could get a feel about where he was coming from. Same thing in the Pentagon.

When we sat down to take the vote, the vote was overwhelmingly in favor of keeping the policy the same.

And so I drafted the memo from Bushnell to Al Haig, saying, "Mr. Secretary, we've reviewed the policy on Bolivia, and it should be steady on course, because we're going to

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get rid of these people down there, with whom we should have no truck whatsoever, and we're going to help the Bolivians to restore a democratic government.”

Well, Bushnell was very upset with us, but he did deliver the memorandum, which Haig did not take kindly. And Bushnell came back and said, “This is not acceptable. The secretary is going to change policy, and we've got to give him a memorandum that let's him change policy.”

So a second SIG meeting was called, and the result was the same. And another memorandum was drafted that said to the secretary, stay on course in Bolivia.

According to Bushnell, when the secretary got that (I guess Bushnell was standing there), he looked at it, crumpled it up and threw it on the floor, and said, “This does not meet my needs.”

Bushnell came back down and we had a small meeting, about eight or ten people out of the Latin American Bureau, and Bushnell. Bushnell sat at the head of the table in the conference room, and Eaton and I, and a guy by the name of Steve Block, and the Bolivian desk officer, a guy by the name of Phil Taylor, and maybe one or two other people were there. And Bushnell, with a quiver in his voice, if not a tear in his eye, said, “You guys are trying to ruin my career. If I can't deliver what the secretary wants to him from you guys, in effect, you're going to ruin my career.”

And we were shocked. Showing how naive we were, we were shocked that the acting assistant secretary of state for Latin America could give a shit that his career was in jeopardy over a matter of principle. The principle was, What kind of country is the United States of America?

And we said to him, “That's really too bad, John. Too bad for you, because your career is not our interest.”

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It was only a couple or three weeks after that that Bushnell was gone (into exile, courtesy of Jesse Helms) and Tom Enders took over. Enders was briefed and agreed that policy should stay where it was, and was willing to defend that with Al Haig.

But I doubt very seriously that we would have held off Al Haig very much longer, when, suddenly, we got real lucky. The minister of interior, the murderer and drug trafficker Army colonel Lucho Arce Gomez, decided to come to Washington. By this time, we'd dragged through February and March. Enders had just taken over, so it was probably April when Lucho Arce Gomez showed up, uninvited, to Washington, and went running around town trying to talk to people. We wouldn't see him in the State Department; he was not allowed in the door of the State Department. We put the word out to all the other U.S. government agencies, including the Pentagon: You are not to see this guy. He did get up on the Hill. I'm not sure he got in to see Helms, but he got in to see his people.

He decided that he would make his big move by placing a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in Arlington. He contacted somebody at the Pentagon and tried to arrange it, and they told him that the minister of interior of Bolivia would not be welcome to place a wreath. Anyway, he went and crashed the gate with his two or three rented limousines, and you had one of the most weird tableaux you can imagine, right in front of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. When the sergeant of the guard came out to try to stop him, Gomez rushed up and placed this wreath. You know, when we heard about it, we didn't know whether to laugh or cry, it was so terrible. The Bolivian ambassador here was rather shamefaced about it, but it was out of his control. Anyway, it was a comic opera thing and we all got a lot of amusement out of it.

But what happened next was the key, and this is where we got really lucky. Lucho Arce Gomez decided that he would do an interview with Mike Wallace for "60 Minutes."

*Q: Would you explain who Mike Wallace is.*



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HART: Mike Wallace was probably the senior correspondent for the CBS newsmagazine 60 Minutes, and one of the toughest questioners ever in the history of journalism. Lucho spoke no English, so the interview was conducted through an interpreter. And it was a tough interview. Lucho thought it was wonderful to get on prime-time U.S. television, but what Mike Wallace did was he started off entitling that segment of the program either "Minister of Cocaine" or "Minister of Drugs," I can't remember which, and during the course of the program, he showed Lucho Arce Gomez to be exactly what he was, to however many million American viewers of that program there were.

And that was the end of any attempt by anybody to reverse U.S. policy toward Bolivia.

Now there were lots of other things that had happened meanwhile. The Bolivians had hired some high-priced lobbyists here in the United States. A former chairman of the Republican National Committee, in fact, was their chief lobbyist in Washington. Enders was starting to waffle a little bit, wondering whether this game was worth the candle, because, after all, Bolivia was only Bolivia.

But when that happened, it really did knock the props out from under the Garcia Mesa regime. And the regime fell, two or three months later, and was replaced by another military regime, which stayed in office for about a year and handed the country over to a democratically elected president.

So the fight to keep the policy of support for democracy as the cornerstone of U.S. interests in Latin America hinged on the little irrelevant country of Bolivia, for serendipity reasons. And we were able, through bureaucratic delays and through obstreperousness and through a lot of arguing and through a willingness to put all our careers on the line (because we were told that those who were thwarting Al Haig were doing so at the risk of their careers), to delay it for a while. I don't think we would have stopped it had it not been for the stupidity of Lucho Arce Gomez.

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It was one thing to stop something from happening wrong in Bolivia, and that was step one, but the second part of the program was: How do you get the Reagan administration to embrace the idea that U.S. interests are best served, not only in Latin America but in general, by support for democracy? And that unfolded *pari passu* with what was going on in Bolivia.

The first Latin American president invited to come to the United States after Reagan took office was the president of Venezuela, Luis Herrera Campino. As I mentioned before, Venezuela had been working with us as a partner in trying to resolve the Central American problem. He was invited and came, I believe, in late April of '81.

As was usual, the Andean Office prepared the drafts of the toast and the speeches and what have you that President Reagan was going to deliver during the two days that the president of Venezuela was here in Washington. And what we chose as the theme was: support for democracy. Everything that we drafted for the White House was focused on the idea that Venezuela and the United States are partners in the noble enterprise of helping to foster democratic institutions in the hemisphere, and we do this both because it's right and because it promotes all of our interests, including security interests.

Much to our surprise, these toasts and speeches were delivered by Reagan almost as written by the Andean Office. (You know, put something before Reagan, and he'd deliver it with sincerity and with seeming conviction. It fooled the American people for eight years, and it came across very well.) So we had on record words of the president, which we could use within the Department of State and with other government agencies, that said this is our policy.

*Q: It's an interesting way, this fighting for the president's words, which then can be used as a club.*

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HART: Exactly. If you can get certain things in writing that the president has said, then, by God, it is policy...until he says something different.

*Q: Let's talk a little about the modality of this. What did you do? Somebody drafts it; where does it go?*

HART: Well, the country directorate is given the job of doing the first draft, the welcoming speech at the White House, the toast at the state dinner, the toast at the return dinner, et cetera. There are usually half a dozen places in a state visit where the president is called upon to say something. And we stacked these things all on the theme of democracy. After the desk has done the original draft, it moves through the assistant secretary's office on up to the Seventh Floor, to one of the under secretaries, or, in some cases, depending on the nature of the visit and who's involved, it might go to the secretary's office, and people can change it before it goes to the White House. Eventually it goes to the president's office in the White House, and the speechwriters and what have you get hold of it there. They may massage it further; they may change it; they may throw the State Department draft in the trash can. Probably it would go to whoever's in charge of the National Security Council for Latin America to take a look at it, dealing with the foreign policy thing.

I think we must have gotten pretty lucky there, because the guy on the National Security Council for Latin America was a person who made Jeane Kirkpatrick look like a flaming liberal, who made Jesse Helms look like a flaming liberal.

*Q: Who was this?*

HART: He was a former CIA guy who had spent most of his years in academia, an Eastern European #migr# naturalized citizen by the name of Constantine Menges. I think it's a huge mistake to let a person with that kind of baggage get into a position of high policy. And I'll include in that the Carter national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and the former secretary of state and national security advisor, Henry Kissinger. They've got too

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much non-American baggage. Brzezinski brought all of that Polish baggage into it. And when you do that, you fail to understand some fundamental values that are important in our system. You've got stuff in there that shouldn't be in there. Constantine Menges was a Cold Warrior because, I think, he's from Czechoslovakia, and it was all a bunch of crap. But he was the Latin American guy, and he must have been sick or away when those went through there, because Constantine didn't believe a word of what was in those speeches. But they went through, and they were delivered with that message intact.

But the story is not over. Ronald Reagan made a trip to Europe, in June of 1981, and it was a disaster—the Bitburg cemetery incident.

*Q: This is where he went to a German cemetery that had SS people buried in it.*

HART: It jumped up and bit him in the ass. There was all kind of stuff. He was received with one-handed applause all over Europe, because he was peddling a type of foreign policy and a type of ideology that the governments in Europe, by and large, were not buying at the time—which was unrestricted ideological warfare against the Soviet Union. By and large, Europe was leery of Ronald Reagan; they thought he might involve them in a nuclear war on their territory.

Things were going very poorly until he got to England. He was asked to address...I don't know whether it was a joint session of the Houses of Parliament or whether it was just the Lower House of Parliament, but he addressed them. This was in Margaret Thatcher's England, fairly early Margaret Thatcher. His theme was: support for democracy. And it was a smash hit. After a week or so of bumping around Europe to terrible notices, he finally struck a chord that got him a lot of applause. And when you got that, plus the positive feedback he'd gotten in Latin American on the things he'd said about support for democracy there, in the months between January of '81, when he came in, and the end of the summer of 1981, you got in place the words and the mindset within the Reagan

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White House that, while there were exceptions to the rule of support for democracy, it was a good policy, as a general rule.

And so what had started to bear some fruit in the Carter administration as a policy, really became bipartisan, by accident as much as anything, in the Reagan administration, because Reagan, I think, had essentially bought the Jeane Kirkpatrick thesis, to start with. And the Jeane Kirkpatrick thesis disappeared from sight and was heard from no more. Thank God you never heard anything more about the distinction that needed to be made between authoritarian regimes and totalitarian regimes.

And I felt that those of us who worked on the Bolivian case and who worked on the Venezuelan case had contributed something to that outcome. Now it got eclipsed in our dealings with the Sandinistas, and it got eclipsed from time to time in other places in the world. But when it got eclipsed, people had to explain and to justify those departures, instead of having it the other way around. And I felt like that was probably the most important contribution that I ever made during my lifetime.

*Q: Well, you're talking about the effect that people have on things, and that Bushnell was caught between your group and the secretary of state, but caring about nothing. Now Tom Enders has a reputation of being a very opinionated, brilliant person.*

HART: Well deserved, on both counts.

*Q: Arrogant is the term, but in a way there is something behind it, too.*

HART: Oh, absolutely.

*Q: How did you find him, not just on this issue but also during that time?*

HART: Tom and I were classmates in the A-100 course when we entered, so we had known each other since we both came into the Foreign Service. And Tom had asked me on a couple of occasions before this to come to work for him. When he was assistant

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secretary in EB, for example, he asked me to come work for him as his senior staff aide. Before that, he asked me to come to Canada with him, to be the economic counselor in Canada. In both cases, I said, "Thank you very much, but I've got something else. I can't do it. I'd love to do it, but I can't do it." I had no desire to work for Tom Enders, because I did not find him to be the kind of person with whom I wanted to work.

When he came in as assistant secretary, he spoke no Spanish, he had no background whatsoever, had never served in Latin America. He was coming out of Canada and Brussels; he had never served in a Spanish-speaking country. He was chosen because...I don't know, he was chosen.

He was able to read himself in to the Latin American situation probably as fast as it's possible for any human being, because Tom can read and absorb material in enormous quantities.

I found, in trying to get his attention on the Andean countries, that he had decided early on that he didn't really want to be involved with the Andean countries. His problem was Central America, and he probably spent 80 percent of his time just on the Nicaraguan, Guatemalan, Honduran problems, the Sandinista problem.

*Q: Salvador.*

HART: Yes, Salvador. Those things just ate him alive. And he really wanted these other things to run themselves—"Don't bother me with anything unless it's really required; handle it yourself." He gave the office directors, certainly gave me, as much head as we wanted to claim for ourselves in dealing with problems. And I convinced the ambassadors in my countries to always deal at the lowest level they could in the State Department, because they'd get answers and solutions there more to their liking and quicker than they could if they wanted to elevate things. And I was able to convince the likes of the vice president of Peru and the Venezuelan ambassador, who was a very, very smart guy and

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was well liked, to deal with me and not to go in to see the assistant secretary at the drop of a hat.

We had no deputy assistant secretary for South America anymore; that job was abolished, the one Sam Eaton had, so there was no deputy assistant secretary for that regional group. So it went from office director to principal deputy to the assistant secretary. You didn't have an assistant secretary for your geographic area, which meant that the office director essentially subsumed that role.

I don't think that the ambassadors for the countries I dealt with went in to see Enders more than two or three times apiece during the two years that Enders was around and I was around. And that was great.

I found that when I went in to brief Enders orally, it did not work out well, because his oral briefing span was about 30 seconds, and if you couldn't say what you wanted to say in 30 seconds, you'd find him on the phone, reading something else on his desk, running out to talk to his secretary about something that Gitana, his wife, wanted done. He would not stay with a tough subject more than about 30 seconds, so I discovered, after about three or four months of frustration in trying to orally brief him on something, not to do it. And so I would write him memoranda, which he would not get to during the day, as a general rule, but he would take home with him, and somehow or another he'd get to them, and in due course, you would get a decision from him that would clearly show that he had read it and understood it. And when I told other people about this, who had worked with Tom before, they laughed and said, "Ah, it took you that long to figure that out, did it?" That's the way you've got to deal with Tom Enders.

He was always very fair with me. I was not one of Enders's boys, although, as I say, he had asked me to work for him a couple of times before, to become economic counselor in Canada (which I had no interest in doing), to be one of his staff aides when he was the assistant secretary for EB. Life's too short to spend it that way. But I think there was a

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certain amount of respect. I was not one of Tom's boys; however, I do think he realized that the Andean Office was functioning well. My two years were going to be up in August of '82, and when I talked to him about putting me in to be ambassador somewhere, I was told in no uncertain terms that that wasn't going to happen. How about being a deputy assistant secretary? That wasn't going to happen; I was not one of Tom's boys.

Steve Bosworth, who had become the principal deputy to Enders, thought that I deserved a shot, as did Ted Briggs, who was the deputy for, essentially, political affairs. Briggs wrote my performance report, and Bosworth endorsed it, and they thought I ran a pretty good office. Bob Ryan had been brought in to be the economic deputy to the assistant secretary, so there were three deputies at the time. Ryan was an Enders boy; he had worked for him in EB and was closely wired with Enders.

I asked to extend in the Andean director's office for a year, because I hadn't located anything that I wanted to do.

I had been offered to be DCM for Jack Gavin in Mexico City, and I had lunch one day with Jack, and I told him I appreciated the offer and made him a suggestion about who he might get and how he might use his DCM, but I told him I was not his guy. At that time, a lot of knowledgeable people told me that was a big mistake. It turned out it was not a big mistake.

*Q: Jack Gavin was an actor who had gone to Mexico as ambassador and who was renowned for running an embassy with his coterie around him without much relationship to anybody in the embassy, including the DCMs.*

HART: He chewed up and spit out about three DCMs. He broke diplomatic relations with the State Department and drafted all of his messages to the White House, because the State Department became the enemy.

But, anyway, I didn't fall into that trap.



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I got to be ambassador to Ecuador through administrative error.

Al Haig was still secretary of state, and he had a friend who had been at West Point with him who had crashed an airplane somewhere while on active duty. It was pilot error, and he had been told he had no real future in the military, and had gotten out of the military at a fairly early age, had gone back to Texas, where he was from, and had made some money. He was a Toyota dealer and he was in real estate and what have you, and he was a big buddy of Al Haig's. And Al Haig decided to bring him in to be the new ambassador in Ecuador. The nomination started to grind its way through the mill.

What Al Haig didn't know and what nobody wanted to tell him was that this buddy of his had lawsuits against him by about half the population of Texas, for shady business dealings. The FBI held its nose for a long time and didn't tell him, either. So this thing dragged on.

I was in telephone conversations with the guy, saying, you know, "When are you going to come to Washington and get your briefing?" I didn't know about it for a while. But then I started to hear about it, and thought, whoa, baby, this thing's got some problems. This was in early 1982.

The way the ambassadorial nominations are handled is, at least at that time, the State Department submits to the White House a list of three officers from the career ranks whom they think are qualified. And they are rank ordered, in essence, about how they think the selection should go, if a career officer is chosen. Also, the personnel office in the White House submits names of political appointees. And then, at some point, somebody, and I don't think it's always the same group of people, sits down and says, "Well, we want this country to go to a political appointee, and this one to go to a..." I don't know whether it's a National Security Council advisor or somebody dealing with Latin America on the National Security Council staff. I think it probably, from time to time, varies as to who does it. At some point, a recommendation goes into the president that says, "Choose one: a political

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appointee or a career officer. Our recommendation is..." and you give him the name. And the president either takes it or says, "I don't want this," and goes back and asks for another name.

I was put on the list at the time when everybody knew that Al Haig's guy was the political appointee. I was put on the list by Steve Bosworth as the number-one person from the Latin American Bureau to go to Ecuador as a career officer. But it was not supposed to be a career-officer post; it was going to be a political appointee. Then Al Haig's guy got into all kinds of trouble, and eventually that name just sank noiselessly into the mud, because he could not get an FBI clearance.

Next thing that was heard was, well, who are other political-appointee possibilities? And the name that arose was a fellow, who was a Republican, the adjutant general of the Puerto Rican Air National Guard, by the name of Orlando Llenza. And Llenza had some political connections with the Reagan White House.

I heard about this, of course; I heard that this was being talked about, and it got around Washington.

And the Ecuadorians, I must say, were really unhappy. Our career ambassador, who had been there for two and a half or three years, was advised that he was going to be replaced by this friend of Al Haig's. So he left the charg# and departed the post in January of '82 and went to be an advisor to the Naval War College out in Monterey, California, which is near where he was from, an assignment that he thought, if he waited, would be gone and he'd better take it while he could get it. So we had a charg# in Quito. The Ecuadorian government, as the months dragged on and we did not get a new ambassador, was unhappy about this.

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So the Ecuadorian ambassador here, Lalo Crespo, was very interested in who the nominee was going to be and about what the delays were. And he asked me, one day, "Who's the frontrunner for this appointment?"

And I said, "I'm not at liberty to tell you."

He and I talked for a while, and I said, "Have you heard any rumors?"

Well, yes, he had heard rumors.

And I said, "Well, run these rumors past me, and we'll see if I've heard any of the same rumors."

Without ever saying so, he knew that Orlando Llenza was the front-running candidate. I didn't tell him he was, but he figured it out. This is what he had heard anyway; he was merely trying to get me to confirm it. And he said, "That will be unacceptable to my government."

And I said, "I don't want to hear about it. If you've got a problem, I'm not the right person to talk to about it. You've got to go talk to Tom Enders."

So he marched in to see Enders and said, "My government would not find it acceptable to have someone who wears a uniform, or who has recently worn a uniform, a major general in the U.S. Air Force, albeit as adjutant general of the Puerto Rican Air National Guard, come to Ecuador, given our history with the military. We have only recently emerged from a military dictatorship, and we don't think that sends the right signal."

So Enders passed that on to the Seventh Floor, and it was passed on to the White House. And Orlando Llenza was dropped.

At about that time, this must have been about May or June of 1982, somebody said, "Oh, shit, why don't we just put a career officer down there." I wasn't present at the meeting

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between Enders and Lalo Crespo, but I think what Lalo probably told Tom was that they would rather have a career person.

Whatever the reason, the next thing I knew, I was told that indeed they were starting to look at the career list, and there was my name.

I was interviewed by the Republican guardians of ideological purity in the State Department, Otto Reich and Bill Middendorf, who had been put in the State Department as political appointees and ideological big brothers. They both knew me—we'd been working together for more than a year by that time—and they were convinced that I was acceptable. I got asked, you know, "How did you vote in the last election?"

And I said, "I voted for a good Republican."

And they said, "That's wonderful."

And I said, "John Anderson, that's who I voted for in the '80 election."

*Q: He was sort of the Independent candidate. I voted for him, too.*

HART: He was a liberal Republican congressman from Illinois, who was the only candidate in 1980 who I thought really talked sense to the American people.

*Q: I voted for him. My wife voted for him. There weren't many of us.*

HART: Well, that was not the answer that the people from the Reagan White House were looking for, but anyway, it was not disqualifying. And a certain amount of steam began to build for the White House to go ahead and offer me the appointment.

Not anybody thought this was going to happen, least of all Tom Enders. At about that time, Tom tried to get me taken off the list, and to get Bob Ryan substituted. I've forgotten where Bob was due to go, but it turned out that wherever in Latin American he was going to go,

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the White House indeed wanted to put a political person. When Bob got bumped from that nomination, Tom tried to get him put into Ecuador. The White House said to Enders, that ain't going to happen. And there were some hard feelings between Enders and the White House about it. But my name stayed on.

And then I was told, well, the decision's going to be made soon. This dragged on through the summer, and it was September when I finally got the call from President Reagan making the offer.

So that's how it happened. It was administrative error all the way.

I got the call on the 13th of September '82, got confirmed, and left for post on about the 18th of December. And that was absolute record time, record time to get everything done. I was more surprised than anybody.

Let me go back to the Andean Office. I will say that the Andean Office was the most challenging and rewarding part of my Foreign Service career. I'd always stayed out of Washington, as a matter of personal preference, as much as I could up until that time. And I felt that duty in Washington was a hardship post, et cetera, and that I was better suited for overseas work. But I found, maybe because of the special circumstances that prevailed in the Latin American Bureau for the office directors at that time, that that is what I probably did best. A combination of working with countries in which I was interested, for ends that I thought were worthy, with a pretty good group of people in the office, with a group of ambassadors who were extraordinarily capable and trustworthy, all of that combined led me to believe that that was the most productive and rewarding period of my life.

*Q: Sam, your mentioning this brings me back to something I meant to ask you before we started this particular segment. You said you left Israel having contributed, you felt, absolutely not one iota in any way. I thought about this, and there's a question I want to ask. We pour an awful lot of money, not just military but economic aid, into Israel. At the*

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*time you were examining this from an economic sense, how well and to what advantage to the U.S. was American taxpayers' money being spent?*

HART: We've not acted in either our own or Israeli long-term interests. By our subsidies, we've allowed the Israelis to continue to engage in domestic and foreign policies that are injurious to the long-term best interests of Israel and certainly injurious to the long-term best interests of the United States of America. And what I mean is, we've allowed them, by creating a military force that they otherwise would not have had, a level of superiority so great in the region that it has let them avoid making the hard choices that need to be made if peace is to be established. Because we gave them this \$3 billion-plus annual subsidy, they didn't have to choose between schoolrooms for Israeli children or an additional two or three airplanes for the Israeli air force. We relieved them of that choice. We allowed them to go first class, militarily, without paying a major domestic cost themselves in terms of what they were going to do with their resources. We've also, because of our political support, allowed them, with the cooperation, I must say, of some rather dumb moves on the part of the Arabs, to avoid making long-term compromises that are going to be necessary for the peace.

Now for a long time the Israelis could say, "Well, there's nobody to talk with; there's no responsible Arab group or nation willing to come forward and to honestly engage in negotiations with us about the future and how we establish and maintain peace." And for a long time it was true. But starting really back in the Seventies, that was no longer true. That was no longer true. There were responsible political figures in the Middle East willing to negotiate in good faith with the Israelis—the "little king" being one.

*Q: The king of Jordan, Hussein.*

HART: Right. And Golda Meir shot that one down. Back during her period of time, there were serious negotiations.

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But, anyway, I don't think that their self-interest or ours has been well served by the essentially blank-check political and economic policy we've pursued.

At the time of the Camp David Accords, the head of the Central Bank of Israel and I sat down one day at lunch and came up with a policy that we thought would be in the best interests of the two countries. And that policy was the following:

“Okay,” the president of the United States should say to Israel and Egypt, “you guys have done something that we think is really important. You have arrived at a bilateral peace agreement between your two countries that have been at war for 30 years (this was '78 or '79; they'd been at war since '48). You've really kind of ended a 30-year war. And you've made some political as well as some economic sacrifices in order to do that. Now you're both major aid recipients of the United States: Israel \$3 billion-plus a year; Egypt about \$2 billion a year. Between you, you absorb 40 percent of the total foreign-aid resources of the United States government every year. In appreciation of the political and economic sacrifices you've made in the name of peace, I, Jimmy Carter, President of the United States, hereby pledge to you the following: I will go to the Congress and ask for a, fill in the blank, \$10 billion, \$15 billion commitment from the Congress, which will be divided between you equally and will be disbursed over the next three years. And you can use this money any way you want to. You can take vacations on the Riviera, or you can buy aircraft carriers, or you can buy real estate in New York. We, frankly, don't care. This is untied money, a payoff of gratitude from the U.S. taxpayers for you two guys making peace. And when that's gone, that's all there is. You're on your own. Goodnight and good luck.”

The head of the Central Bank of Israel and I thought it was a wonderful policy. And I went back and wrote a cable to that effect to Washington recommending it as a policy, which never got past Sam Lewis, obviously. It never got past Sam Lewis, who did not think it was good policy at all.

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I'm still convinced that was the policy we should have followed. That's the policy we should follow today. Now when I say that's it, that doesn't mean that humanitarian aid or something like that from time to time might not be well justified. But major budgetary subsidies of the type that we have provided these two countries make no sense.

*Q: Well, that was an aside, but I did want to fill that in. Sam, we're now back to where you served from the very end of '82 until '85 as ambassador to Ecuador. What was the situation in Ecuador, as you saw it?*

HART: I knew Ecuador pretty well after having been in the Andean Office for almost two and a half years before going there. I knew all the principal players. I probably was in a position to hit the ground running in a way that very few incoming ambassadors are.

What I thought the U.S. agenda should be in Ecuador, which was put in a cable shortly after I got to Quito, was the following:

Number one was support for democracy.

Number two was, as one way of supporting democracy, to try to get the Ecuadorians to modify their military objectives in a way that would lead them away from the old stance (which was confrontation or looking at Peru as an enemy, and investing a lot of resources in that) and reorient them toward promoting democracy in civic action internally.

Priority number three was to keep the tuna problem from getting in the way of everything else and overwhelming it by simply having us at loggerheads over something that we had diametrically opposed laws on.

Number four was to clean up the embassy act (I thought it was a rather poorly run embassy) and to try to really put some management controls on what was going on there.



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I will say that over the two years and four months I was in Quito, on number one, support for democracy, we got an A. It certainly came first in my mind on everything.

On number two, reorienting the military, we were making terrific strides under Hurtado, and it totally fell apart when the León Febres Cordero government came in in August of '84. León was not interested in that.

*Q: This was a democratic government.*

HART: This was a democratic government, elected in like June of '84 and took office in August of '84. It had a totally different mindset to and Febres was a totally different kind of person than Hurtado. In '84, León Febres Cordero became the president of Ecuador, and the idea of reorienting the Ecuadorian military ended right there.

On the tuna problem, we solved it. And we solved it by appealing to the practicality of a group of people who you wouldn't usually think reacted to that. But the way the tuna problem was solved was, the foreign minister and I, when I was the ambassador there, worked out the following arrangement in conjunction with the American Tuna Fishing Association, Augie Falano, executive director, out of San Diego, California. Any time the Ecuadorian navy spotted an American fishing boat fishing inside the 200-mile limit, the first thing they were to do was to notify the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Ministry would pick up the phone and call me. I would pick up the phone and call Augie Falano. And Augie Falano would get on the radio to the tuna boat captain and tell him he better get out of there in a hurry. Meanwhile, the Ecuadorian navy would put a very slow boat on the case. And we would get that boat out of there. It worked the whole time I was involved with it, and as far as I know, it's still working, although we now recognize the 200-mile limit. So I guess it's probably not a problem, because our legal position is now in...

*Q: So we no longer would support them if they were...*

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HART: If they were captured. We ran out of money in that fund, anyway. The fund ran out of money, and Congress wouldn't appropriate any more. So the idea that we were going to compensate the tuna boat captains for fines and licenses and whatever else they got hit with if they got captured became a dead letter.

*Q: It took away the incentive for them to do an in-your-face type thing.*

HART: That's right. Periodically we'd get a report that there was a tuna boat fishing and that an Ecuadorian vessel was being dispatched to intercept it...in a matter of minutes, you're on the phone to Augie...in a matter of a few more minutes, that boat is headed in the other direction. And that's the way we dealt with it. My pitch to the foreign minister, which he accepted, was there's no way legally we're ever going to resolve this conundrum. The only way reasonable people are going to do it is to find practical ways to avoid a confrontation. You don't want one and we don't want one, so why don't we do it this way? And that's the way it was done.

On management of the embassy, I got an F, I think. I found (and I think this was probably one of the most frustrating things I ever went through) that an American ambassador in a country like Ecuador does not have at his disposal the tools necessary to manage an embassy.

*Q: What was the problem with the embassy, as you saw it?*

HART: Well, as one wise person said, no rational foreign ministry or state department or whatever would send its best people to a place like Quito, Ecuador. Now that was said in jest, and we had a few good people. But we had, in Quito, an embassy that had something like ten or eleven U.S. government agencies represented. We had, in Quito, 85 American employees and another 15 in Guayaquil. So we had 100 American employees and about 150 or 200 Ecuadorian employees in Ecuador, representing practically a whole panoply of U.S. government agencies. We had State; we had a large AID mission. Shortly after I got

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there, I got a call from Mr. Peter McPherson, the head of AID, who said, "Would you do me a big personal favor?"

"What is that?"

"Would you accept Orlando Llenza as your AID director?"

Orlando Llenza is the Air National Guard commander out of Puerto Rico who at one time had been a candidate to be ambassador to Ecuador and was shot down by the Ecuadorian ambassador to the United States.

And I said, "Well, I really am not enthusiastic about this. You promised me that I was going to get a good AID director down here."

He said, "We'll get you a good deputy AID director."

So I got Orlando Llenza as the AID director. And Orlando Llenza never figured out, and I don't know that he ever really cared, what an AID director was supposed to do, but it wasn't what I wanted an AID director to do. I wanted an AID director to manage the program so that the U.S. taxpayer got some kind of return on the dollar. And that was not what the AID mission there was engaged in. They were engaged in feathering their own nest and currying favors and doing their friends favors. I tried to eliminate that, and I failed, because AID started to look at me as the enemy. When they had a program that had not gone anywhere, and was not going to go anywhere, and I said, "Look, eliminate this baby," I became the enemy, not only of the AID mission in Quito, but of the AID hierarchy in Washington.

We had State; we had AID; we had CIA.

We had four or five colonels, or that equivalent, in the military part of the embassy: we had a Navy captain who was the defense attach#; we had an Air Force colonel who was the air attach#; we had an Army colonel who was the Army attach#; we had an Army colonel

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who was assigned there as a medical person for CUNDIT; we had an Air Force lieutenant colonel who was the MILGROUPE commander; and then we had some other people. So we had a lot of military people, a whole lot of military people.

We had a lot of DEA people.

*Q: Drug Enforcement Agency.*

HART: Yes.

The CIA station was larger than the embassy political and economic sections combined.

The U.S. Mapping Service down there had a fairly large presence.

*Q: Defense Mapping Agency or something like that.*

HART: No, it was not Defense Mapping, that wasn't it, but anyway, they were engaged in mapping.

We had a Department of Commerce political-appointee commercial attaché, who I recommended be thrown out of the service and to whom the Department of Commerce decided, on top of my recommendation, to give a performance award. I felt that he was behaving in a totally unethical way, and I recommended that he be thrown out, and, instead, they gave him a performance award for that year, which I didn't find very nice.

But I think it's symptomatic of the problem you have. An ambassador cannot hire, cannot fire, cannot really give management incentive to people to perform their jobs efficiently, and with the taxpayers' objectives in mind, and within the context of the country plan of what has been approved as U.S. policy toward that particular country, for the simple reason that you can't promote and you can't assign, you can't hire and you can't fire.

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And so you say to the AID director, "Look, I want you to rank order your programs in a way so that we can maybe find out how to eliminate some waste here," and he refuses to do it. He may not say, "No, I won't do it," but it just doesn't get done. There's always a reason why it can't be done this week. This person doesn't answer to you, but answers to somebody in Washington, and your only alternative, if the person won't do what you want to do, is to have them thrown out. Then you find yourself essentially powerless.

I threw out one person while I was in Quito; I threw out the USIA PAO for directly defying me. And I got the reputation around Washington as a guy who was throwing all these people out down in Quito. I threw out one person, because I told him that I wanted something done, and he refused to do it. He didn't ever tell me, "No, I won't do it." He told his people, who told me that he'd said in a staff meeting, "The ambassador wants this, but I ain't gonna do it." I considered that insubordination, and so I had him thrown out. And I paid a tremendous price for it. Not too long after, he got selected into senior career status, senior Foreign Service, by USIA. Go figure. I was very frustrated about it.

I instituted management by objectives. I tried to make everything that we did in the embassy serve some identifiable purpose. If USIA said they wanted their next exchange visitor brought in to be an expert on the nose flute, I said, "And what foreign-policy interest does that serve?" Well, in most cases, it was because somebody knew the nose-flute player and they thought he deserved to get out of the cold of upstate New York in January. And that wasn't good enough. Very frustrating.

My advice to ambassadors is, don't try to be a manager. Nobody loves you; nobody appreciates you. Have a very short list of objectives—very short list, like two—concentrate on those. Let the embassy go to hell in a handbasket. Nobody thanks you if you try to do anything about it. And if you do try to do anything about it, and try to make this an organization that indeed commits its resources where it says its interests are, you become a villain. Management, like economics, is one of those things the State Department

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occasionally pays lip service to, but the reward and punishment system is skewed against doing anything serious about it. I got very frustrated.

*Q: How'd you find the U.S. military? I've heard that in places like Ecuador, they put colonels who are way past their prime, if they ever had it, out to pasture.*

HART: Well, you know, the attach# system has always been very unequal among the services. By and large, the Army provides the best attach#s worldwide, because there is almost a career track in the Army system for attach#s and MILGROUP-type commanders. They make their people take area-study programs. They train them up at the... They really do a fairly competent job in training professionals who can deal in foreign cultures. The Navy probably does the second-best job. And the Air Force is the dead-level worst. Most of those people have arrived at the rank of full colonel by boring holes in the sky in some type of aircraft, and this is something they did to them as, "Oh, by the way, for the next two years or so, this is what you're going to be doing, colonel." These people have no interest and no incentive, and a lot of times are just too damn dumb to be able to handle what's involved. Just too damn dumb. But Army attach#s, by and large, are the best.

My problem with the military was, I could never ever get them to give me any opinion other than the one they thought I wanted to hear. The way I tried to deal with all significant issues in the embassy was to convene the senior country team, essentially the agency heads, and say, "Okay, here's our problem. What do you think about it? What should we do? What are our options? I want your best opinion." I found these people stuck their thumbs neatly up their ass holes, waited for clues about what I thought, and, if they thought they had some clues, would say, "Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full." I could never get any kind of independent judgment on anything. This is the pitfall that ambassadors frequently encounter with the military. There's a real attraction for ambassadors—political-appointee ambassadors even more than career, but career to some extent, too—to become very cozy with the military, because the military will do any Goddamn thing you tell them to, even if it's illegal. And so, when you get that kind of personal loyalty, it's hard

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to resist. It's like being loved by somebody; it's hard not to respond in some way. These people are so anxious and so committed to pleasing you, because they think that that's their main job, rather than to give you their best professional advice, which is what I always asked for—"I want your best professional advice."

I'd say the military was the worst, but I'll tell you the truth, out of an embassy of something like a hundred American employees, there were only maybe two or three who ever gave me what I considered to be well-thought-out counsel on a policy issue.

Foreign Service officers are not a hell of a lot better, most of the time. They want to find out what the boss wants to hear, then they'll jump in and say, "Yes, yes, not only did the sun rise in the west this morning, but wasn't it a beautiful sunrise?"

*Q: Did you get any support from Washington?*

HART: The first year and a half I was in Ecuador, U.S. relations with Ecuador could not have been better, could not have been improved on. That was while Oswaldo Hurtado was the president of Ecuador. The support I got from Washington started to dry up the moment that Febres Cordero was elected president of Ecuador. Things changed from a pragmatic, nonideological viewpoint in dealing with Ecuador to a highly charged political method of dealing with Ecuador. As long as Tom Enders was the assistant secretary of state for Latin America, I could count on pretty good support out of the Department. The moment that Tony Motley became assistant secretary, all I would get was highly skewed political stuff out of there. As long as Les Scott was the acting country director for the Andean Office (Les had been my deputy when I left there), I could count on the Andean Office giving me excellent support. The moment that Fernando Rondon took over, that support started to dry up, because you had totally different agendas.

*Q: You're talking about the Washington agenda.*

HART: That's correct.

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*Q: What was the Washington agenda?*

HART: The moment that León Febres Cordero became a presidential candidate and appeared to be headed toward the presidency, people in the State Department and in the White House started to think of this as an ideological thing, because Febres Cordero was a great public proclaimer of his affinity to the free-enterprise system, to the anti-Communist stance of the United States, and all this other stuff. He was very astute at jerking the chains of the Reagan administration on what they wanted to hear, and he presented himself to them not only as the future of Ecuador, but as the future of Latin America. He was going to prove forever and ever that the free enterprise system of the Reagan type was not only the model for the United States—supply-side economics, et cetera—but was the future model for Latin America, and maybe the whole world. And there were some people who bought this crap.

I was not one of them. And what I said on Febres Cordero was, “There are some good things about this guy, and there are some bad things about this guy. But the correct posture for the United States does not require us to make a final judgement about this. It's really not our judgement to make. It's the Ecuadorian people's judgement to make about whether or not he is president in a way that satisfies their aspirations and their needs. What we need to do is to conduct ourselves in such a way that, rather than become identified with an individual or a party, we become identified with the idea of support for democracy, whatever form that may take, as long as it is truly democratic, so that we can work with this man today and with someone from a totally different ideological cut of cloth a few years down the line. We don't become identified with people or with parties, we become identified with ideals.”

I totally failed to sell that to anybody back in Washington after Febres Cordero was elected. And that eventually ended in my leaving Ecuador.

*Q: Why? Did you feel that we were making too close an embrace of...*



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HART: There was a real impetus from within the White House and the State Department to cozy up to Febres Cordero.

He decided that I had assisted his opponent, who was a Social Democrat, a socialist, in the election. There wasn't a word of truth to it. He would never say that to me personally, but people around him were spreading it all around Ecuador, and were coming to Washington and telling the White House that I had supported his opponent in the election, and that the U.S. Embassy had supported his opponent in the election. And when that kind of stuff was repeated time and time again here in Washington, nobody said to Febres Cordero or anybody around him, "That's the biggest bunch of crap I've ever heard, and I don't want to hear about it again, because it's a lie!" I said it to him, but we didn't get that kind of denial out of Washington. What we got out of Washington was, "Well, if that happened, it sure wasn't U.S. policy." Fred Rondon was peddling that sort of stuff. I got no support whatsoever from Tony Motley. I was left to hang out to dry, in essence, although I had a piece of paper that said this is U.S. policy (as I described to you), and that's what was carried out.

The prevailing wisdom here was, this man is ideologically simpatico, in the White House and on the Hill, to the Republicans, and you'd better be seen as being highly supportive of him no matter what. And what I was trying to do was report what was actually happening in Ecuador, some of which was good, and some of which was not good. Every time I'd send them something that was not good, I'd hear kind of reverberations about it, and Rondon would say something to me like, "I'm not sure that you should report this kind of thing."

And I'd say, "Are you suggesting that I edit the truth? Are you suggesting that this is untrue?"

"No, I'm not suggesting that."

"Then what you're saying is, I should edit the news for my readers. Is that professional?"

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And Rondon would say something like, "Well, it's your choice. But I want you to know that some people don't want to hear this."

And I said, "Too bad."

And in the end, the Febres Cordero government made it known to Washington that I was not on their team and that they wanted me out of there. And in the end, I was forced out.

*Q: What was the point of difference with this government?*

HART: The problems were so hard to put your finger on because nobody would be honest.

Shortly after Febres Cordero won the election, Peter McPherson, uninvited, came down to Ecuador.

*Q: He was head of AID.*

HART: And we had a meeting with the incoming Febres Cordero economic team, and Febres Cordero, et cetera, et cetera, in Guayaquil, and they laid out what their wish list was of U.S. assistance. McPherson sat there and led them to believe that everything they wanted was probably going to happen. And when I sat down with them, I said, "Let me tell you that a lot of what you're asking for is probably not going to happen. You can ask for it, and I'll send your request on to Washington, and I'll recommend, in fact, that favorable consideration be given to it. But I want you to know, it ain't gonna happen. And I would suggest that you concentrate your efforts in other places where we in fact can be helpful."

In the Hurtado administration, we had been very useful to the Ecuadorians.

You must remember, by this time the debt problem had come crashing down all over Latin America. Ecuador and practically every other country on the continent (not quite all of them, but most of them) were unable to meet all of their ongoing financial obligations, and were in default, in one sense or another (in de facto default even though not in de

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jure default), on all kinds of financial obligations to governments and to banks and to international lending institutions.

I had helped the Hurtado government get enormous amounts of U.S. economic assistance, primarily by getting them PL 480, Title One-type of food aid, which they had to import anyway, and by getting them a lot of CCC credits, which were three- to five-year credits that were more favorable for agricultural imports than they could get anywhere else. We were trying to get them through a crisis until the economic situation improved enough so that they could resume normal dealings.

The Febres Cordero government came in with the idea that, because their ideology was pure and close to the Reagan ideology, we were going to do a lot of special things for Ecuador. I tried to convince them that they shouldn't assume that, and that they ought to concentrate more on using the resources available than on spending an awful lot of political capital trying to get stuff like Economic Support Fund money, which was softer money and on more favorable terms (but much harder to get) than, say, CCC credits.

Well, what they heard from me, although this was not what I was saying, was that I'm not supporting you. Wrong. But when people in Washington from the Ecuadorian Embassy talked to the State Department, to people like Fernando Rondon, the message they got was, "Well, gee, we would like to help you up here, but, you know, the ambassador's not very excited about this program."

*Q: What's Fernando Rondon's background? Was he a regular Foreign Service officer?*

HART: Career Foreign Service officer. He went to the Andean job after being ambassador in Madagascar. Hispanic who got appointed to that job under the Carter administration. A man of, I would say, modest achievements. And, as far as I could tell, someone who decided on which side his bread was buttered early on, and if it was his own self-interest, never mind anything else that might be going on.

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I noted early on that the kind of backing and support that I needed out of Washington to carry out U.S. policy there was not forthcoming from that moment on. We did business, but increasingly, after the election, what I was hearing from Rondon was, "Either you get on the Febres Cordero bandwagon or you're in big trouble here."

And my answer to that was, "Not only am I not going to get on the Febres Cordero bandwagon, I think it shows a lack of professionalism for any career Foreign Service officer to even talk in such terms."

Well, he was right and I was wrong.

I went to Febres Cordero a number of times, when I was hearing these rumors, long after the election, that I had been helping his opponent during the campaign, and said, "I hear these rumors. Do you believe them?"

"Well," he said, "at one time maybe I did, but I don't now."

And I said, "Well, let me set the record straight for you. It's a damn lie, and I defy anybody to find one shred of evidence to back it up. It is not only a damn lie, it's a goddamn lie. I will always tell you the truth. And I'm telling you the truth now. But I want you to know something, if that's what you believe, then I'm of no further use here, and I'll be glad to get the hell out."

Well, things weren't good, and I felt like when people wrote letters to the President of the United States claiming that I was anti-Reagan, and the answer that they got from the White House, which was probably drafted by Rondon, did not deny this or say, "We don't even want to hear this kind of crap out of you," instead, what they really said was, "We don't have any indication that he's doing what you say." It really was the most minimal kind of response—kind of thank you for your cards and letters.

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There was a guy in the American community there, a retired Foreign Service officer and right-wing Republican who had tried to get the job as U.S. ambassador to Ecuador, who kept trying to organize me and other members of the embassy, in essence, into a Republican club down in Ecuador. Tried to get me to come address them and this kind of thing—Republicans in Ecuador. And I said, “That is not my role. My role is to represent the president in his relations here. And it would be, really, if not illegal, certainly unwise for me to take part in partisan politics.”

Those people were writing letters to the White House, and I was getting feedback from that. When Vice President George Bush came down to the inauguration of Febres Cordero, he had a letter in his hand when he arrived. And as soon as he got in the car, he said to me, “I've got this letter from this group of American businessmen,” (really it was one guy) “asking me to meet with them privately. They want to discuss you. What's this all about?”

And I said, “This is a group of people, who have their own agenda, who are trying to make the U.S. ambassador a political figure. And I don't think that's the role I should be in. They're trying to make me a promoter of President Cordero and a promoter of the Republican Party here in Ecuador. And I've refused to have a part in it.”

He said, “You're absolutely right,” and he didn't meet with them.

But this kind of stuff, for an ambassador, is very, very corrosive.

*Q: Oh, sure it is.*

HART: Very corrosive, because people get wind of this, and never mind who's right and who's wrong. If you've got this kind of odor around you, everybody assumes that it's probably coming from you. Even though you may not be the one who fouled the atmosphere, it's around you, and that's enough.

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When I was back here in Washington in late August of '84 (shortly after the inauguration, I took home leave), I went in to see Ron Spiers, who was under secretary for management at the time, and I said, "Ron, I have some problems downstairs. I feel like I'm getting no support from Tony Motley; I feel like the office director is working against me. They won't do it up-front on a policy issue; it's really a very personal kind of thing. And I'm concerned about my situation."

And he said, "Relax. Those who know about these things know you're doing a good job. We've got some problems down in the Latin American Bureau. Motley wants to get his people into key positions, et cetera, et cetera, and he hasn't gotten a single one of his people placed in an ambassadorial post since he's been there. But relax, I'll take care of you. You're going to be there probably till January, or thereabouts, of '86." (In other words, I was going to be there another 14, 15 months, something like that.)

I said, "Okay," and I went back to Ecuador.

And then something important happened. Ron Spiers went on a long trip to visit a lot of posts; he was gone for about a month. Tony Motley had decided that he was leaving the U.S. government and going into private business, and he had a list of about ten or so ambassadors in Latin America that he wanted to replace with people of his choosing. While Ron Spiers was out of town, Tony Motley got the ear of George Shultz and of the deputy secretary, and he got his list through. It was called a massacre, and it got a lot of newspaper notice around town. I was one of those people; I was not Motley's boy. And the guy nominated to succeed me was Fernando Rondon. I found out about this by a phone call in December of 1984, and they said, "We want you to hear this from us." I think it was Rondon who called. "You should hear it before you read it in the newspaper," (because it would have come in on the wireless file sometime during the day) "that you're probably going to be replaced."

And I said, "Who's going to replace me?"

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And he said, "I am."

I had never had a conversation with Motley of any kind about this. I had had one conversation with Motley in which he had taken exception to some things I had said or done. I explained why I had done them or said them or whatever, and I said, "Do I have a problem with you?"

And he said, "No, you don't have a problem."

And I said, "I want to take this upstairs if I have a problem with you."

He denied the problem, but, boy, my throat was cut. I got hold of Ron Spiers and said, "What's going on?"

He said, "I'm trying to turn it around, but you're not the only one. Motley pulled off a coup. I'm trying to play catch up, and I don't think I'll be able to."

Only one person came to my defense, Jesse Helms, who thought I was being removed because I was too conservative for Motley's taste. Jesse Helms went on record in the Congressional Record defending me and a couple of other people. There were some political appointees who got axed at the same time who were friends of Jesse's.

I never went public on anything involved in this; I always stayed private. I never told the Ecuadorians what was going on. But, of course, they knew (it was in the papers) that a change was coming. I felt like my effectiveness had been greatly damaged by this, but I went to the president again and reviewed the bidding about the support for his opponent crap. And he told me that absolutely I had no problem, that he had had no hand in this, et cetera, et cetera. When I asked in Washington why this was happening, the answer I got was, "Essentially because you couldn't get along with the Febres Cordero government."

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Things kind of rocked along from December to March. David Rockefeller came into town with a group of people and had a meeting with Febres Cordero, in which Febres Cordero said to David Rockefeller and the people there assembled that I had supported his opponent in the previous election. David came to my house for lunch and told me this, in March '85.

I went back to the embassy and convened the senior country team meeting and explained to them the situation and said, "What do you think I ought to do?" They weren't any help. So then I said, "Unless somebody can give me a good reason not to, what I plan to do is to send a cable to the secretary of state asking for immediate relief." Rondon's nomination was wandering around somewhere, but it was going to be a long time before it ever got through. He finally arrived there in August of '85. I asked to be relieved in March of '85, and actually left the first week in April of '85. I said to the secretary of state, "I consider that my usefulness here has ended. If the president of this country persists in telling me one thing, and telling David Rockefeller something absurd like this, I feel that it's an embarrassment to the United States of America and to me personally to be in this position. Therefore, I ask to be relieved." And I was relieved.

When I submitted my letter of resignation, the answer I got back, which was probably drafted by Rondon, was like, "Thank you for your resignation, goodbye." There was no attempt, there was no intent, to say anything that might indicate that I had contributed anything to the U.S.-Ecuadorian relationship.

*Q: The Department of State, in all fairness, has always been terrible at this sort of thing, anyway. It is absolutely almost without soul or style as far as...*

HART: Well, you can't talk about the Department of State, you can only talk about the individuals, because the Department is us.

*Q: It's us.*



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HART: Here we had a guy who had stabbed me in the back repeatedly being in charge of drafting the response to my cable of resignation. And it was not nice.

I had always planned to retire in my early fifties. I had planned to retire at age fifty as the director of Andean affairs. When it didn't work that way, I really had always planned to retire shortly after Ecuador unless something really attractive came along.

I came back and I went to see the director general, who was George Vest, and Ron Spiers, and I asked both of them, "Am I damaged goods?" Both of them assured me that I was not, and if I would be patient, I would have another assignment that would be very good. But they had a lot of people, coming off ambassadorial jobs, stacked up here who were awaiting assignments, and I'd have to be patient. And I said, "I am not going to be patient. And the reason is, if you hang around these corridors long enough in this kind of situation, the institution will humiliate you. I don't want to be like a heavyweight boxer who's had too many bouts and doesn't know when to say, 'This is it; I'm out of here.' If I don't have a job, which I find attractive, within three months, you will have my retirement papers on your desk."

In three months, I didn't have that assignment, and they had my retirement papers.

And I walked out of that building with a terrible bitter taste in my mouth. Maybe I shouldn't; probably I wasn't treated any worse than anybody else.

I made some mistakes, no doubt about it. I underestimated both the lack of ethics and the conspiratorial skills of people like Rondon.

*Q: What happened to him?*

HART: He went as ambassador to Ecuador. He told the staff that he was there to get into as close contact and to be as supportive of León Febres Cordero as he could possibly be.

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And he spent the next three years doing exactly that. And anybody or anything that had been identified with me, he found some way to eliminate it. And he did.

I have not been back to Ecuador, although I've been to Latin America a couple of times since then. I have no interest in Ecuador.

The whole thing was, I felt, a really kind of sorry way to end a career. And if I had it to do over again, if I had the choice between being ambassador to Ecuador or retiring out of the Office of Andean Affairs, I would rather retire out of the Office of Andean Affairs.

*Q: But you got some things done.*

HART: Got things done. Got a lot of things done the first year or so I was in Ecuador, too. It was an exhilarating time, because when I needed something, when I really needed to talk to somebody about something, when I needed to cut a deal that was both in Ecuador's interest and mine, I had immediate access to the president, and I had good backing from Washington, as long as Les Scott was around. But that disappeared.

We got a lot done. We moved the relationship about as far along the road as it's ever been, and it hasn't been that far along the road since. It was a relationship based on mutual respect and truthfulness. I can't pretend anytime. I'm incapable of keeping up a pretense more than about fifteen minutes. Even if I don't say the words about what I think, my body language and my facial expression and everything else are such that nobody has to hear any words; they know how I feel about the subject.

And, in essence, it was going from Hurtado, a man who was pretty much the same way in dealing with people...going back to an old style of Ecuadorian political leader, a caudillo. And Febres Cordero was a caudillo who tried to jerk the ideological chains, and succeeded to some degree.

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In my farewell message out of Ecuador, which I sent around the hemisphere, I said, "Let's not forget what we're really about here. Let's keep in mind what our interests really are. Let's don't get in bed with this guy, because he's headed, down the line, for some real troubles, and we don't need to be involved in that kind of thing."

He was, and we were.

And in the next four years, under his successor, Rodrigo Borja, who was the guy I was accused of having helped in the election, I don't think that our relationship ever recovered. I don't know for sure, because I wasn't there, but my impression is that that fellow never trusted us.

No big deal. The world goes on. I think that we get so parochial that we think someplace like Ecuador really is the navel of the earth, if you are there, and that's the main risk. That's ridiculous. There is no great harm to any major group of people if the American ambassador does a bad job in a place like Ecuador, because it's not the main center of the axis.

But if that's what you're responsible for, if you've been asked to give it your best shot, and you don't give it your best shot, you're instead looking at your next assignment or you're trying to curry favor—that's unprofessional. If you're trying to shape the message to what people want to hear—that's unprofessional. Even though it may not be center stage, it may not even be one of those three rings, it may be somewhere off in a side tent, if you're a professional, I think you have to give it your best. And your best is to give your best advice and to make your best suggestions for policy and actions as your professional skills let you do, regardless of what the consequences may be for you personally. That's where I come from.

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*Q: Well, I think it's highly commendable, and I'm all for it. There is a real problem here in foreign affairs (it's true in any organization) of careerism versus principle. Well, Sam, shall we call a halt?*

Sam just had a little story he wanted to tell, and I want to get it.

HART: Well, the little story is about the rather strange relationship between the Russian ambassador and myself in Quito.

The Russian position in Quito was a little bit out of whack with what it was in most places in Latin America. First of all, the Ecuadorian Communist Party was insignificant. I mean, they really couldn't turn out any votes. They could call a strike or something like that, but nobody took them very seriously. Certainly the Russian Embassy didn't take them very seriously. The Communists in Ecuador, such as they were, were more ideologically aligned with the Cubans and to a certain extent even with the Maoists than they were with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union put a few resources in there, into the Communist Party, but they weren't that concerned about the Communist Party.

After the military were replaced by a democratic government in Ecuador in 1980, the Soviets put a very, very skillful career ambassador there who had a fairly long history in Latin America, who worked hard in support of Ecuadorian democracy. And we found that we were operating on the same page, and in fact on the same paragraph, of the same book, in terms of what we saw our national self-interest being in Ecuador, which was: support for democracy.

Not everybody felt that way. The Cuban ambassador certainly didn't. The Cubans were giving aid and training to a crazy group of left-wing anarchists, really, who from time to time caused us a little trouble in the embassy and elsewhere, called the Alfaro Vive Carajo group. Crazyes.

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But, anyway, the Russian ambassador and I found that we were somewhat kindred spirits. He had been their chief negotiator for the Law of the Seas before coming to Ecuador. As such, he had had a good deal of contact with Elliot Richardson, who was our Law of the Seas negotiator, and had formed a personal friendship.

The CIA station chief in Ecuador was a real idiot by the name of Walter Berwick. Walter had been the station chief in Jamaica and had had a big success in Jamaica in recruiting the prime minister, who's name I cannot exactly remember right now (Michael Manley). Born in Boston, I think. Anyway, Walter Berwick had had this big success story in Jamaica. Had no real Latin American experience and had come to Quito as a hotdog going to duplicate his efforts in Quito. And caused me enormous problems. I spent more time trying to keep Walter Berwick on the reins than I did doing something positive. Very bad case of cold warriorism. Walter was eventually relieved from his job over this, but it was long after the fact.

Anyway, I got to be very friendly with the Russian ambassador. And one day, Walter came to me and said, "Would you be willing to see whether or not we can recruit the Russian ambassador?"

And I said, "Walter, are you crazy? The Russian ambassador's not going to let us recruit him. Are you asking him to defect?"

And he said, "No, no, we wanted to recruit him in place. And we have reason to believe he may be receptive."

And I said, "I think that's dumb."

He said, "Well, it won't cost us anything to try."

And I said, "Well, it could be awfully embarrassing."

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"Well, we can do it in a way where it won't be that embarrassing."

So the short of the story is, over time, we worked out a scenario. And here's how it happened. I invited the Russian ambassador over to have a drink one afternoon at my house, and we sat and talked about Ecuador and what have you for a while. Finally, at some moment where it didn't seem too much off the subject of conversation, I started to talk about what he wanted to do with his future, where he might go after Ecuador. And what I said to him was, "If you ever decide you'd like to make a basic change in your life, I think I could arrange for it to happen in a way that would make it rather easy. For example, your old friend Elliot Richardson would be willing to come down here and talk to you about it."

This guy said, "What?"

I kind of repeated it and rephrased it, trying to find some way to get through this moment without appearing to be a total fool.

And this guy, when I finished a second time, looked at me and smiled and said, "No, I don't think so."

And that was the last that was ever said of it. It was surreal. That's the story.

Now there's another story I'll tell you, about the Nicaraguan ambassador. Cuban-Ecuadorian relationships had been left at the charg# level because of a problem they'd had some years before. But the Nicaraguan was not a Sandinista himself; his son was a Sandinista. He was a dentist, and he had been sent down there as a favor of the Sandinista government to his son. But the Nicaraguans were mucking around all over Ecuadorian politics, including with the Alfaro Vive Carajo group, and we caught them red-handed with the documents and what have you, financing and recruiting and training these

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people to come back and be terrorists in Ecuador. And the Ecuadorian government had this.

The number-two guy in the Foreign Ministry and I were very close friends, and I said to him, "I'm going to do something. And I want you to know about it beforehand, so if something happens, you'll realize what went on."

And the story was this: Alfaro Vive Carajo threw a couple of sticks of dynamite over the patio wall of the embassy one night, in the middle of the night, and it went off and shattered acres of plate-glass windows in the embassy lobby. And only because our one smart Marine was on that night did he not run out there and pick that up and be blown to bits. He got behind a pillar when he saw that thing with a fuse come over the wall.

They left a note that Alfaro Vive Carajo had done it, and we found out that indeed it was they who had done it. And I knew the Nicaraguan Embassy was involved with this group.

At the Christmas Day cocktail that the president of Ecuador always had, I stood next, in the protocol receiving line, to the Nicaraguan ambassador. (He had presented his credentials right after I had, so we always stood next to each other on ceremonial occasions.) I had told the British ambassador and another guy in the Foreign Ministry what I was going to do, so that they could watch.

After we had had a glass of champagne, I pulled the Nicaraguan aside and I said to him, "Doctor, I just want you to know something. We know that the Alfaro Vive Carajo group exploded this bomb in our embassy recently. And we know they have a list of people in the embassy whom they would like to kidnap or in some other way do harm to. And we also are well aware of your government's connection to these people. And I just want to tell you, just so you'll know, because I think you ought to know, that if anything happens to any of my people, or we get another attack of the kind that we got the other night, that

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my government will go directly to the source on this, and our response will be swift and powerful. I just thought you ought to know that.”

I think a large brown spot appeared on the back of his pants about that time. And he stuttered and denied it.

And I said, “Well, I'm glad to know that your embassy doesn't have anything to do with this. Because, if it did, you'd have a problem. But I'm glad to know you don't have this problem. I really appreciate these assurances. But keep in mind what I said.”

Well, I broke off and went over to the British ambassador, and he was practically lying on the floor, laughing.

That guy beat a path out of there, went on leave back to Nicaragua, and hardly ever showed up again in Quito before he resigned his post.

If the Department had ever found out what I had done, they would have probably been upset about it.

*Q: Yeah, yeah, but it helps. It helps.*

HART: The Nicaraguan, before he left, went over to the Foreign Ministry and complained to the guy I had told I was going to do this, the deputy foreign minister, that I had threatened him. And, with his best straight face, the deputy foreign minister told him he didn't understand what he was talking about; there must have been some misunderstanding in the language.

So that was the story.

Attachments: Costa Rica and Chile

Attachment 1: COSTA RICA



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I need to put on paper a story which unfolded years ago, in late 1970 and early '71 to be exact, in Costa Rica, while I was stationed there in the U.S. embassy. I've told the tale many times, but because of its complexity and nuances, I've usually not done it justice. The few exceptions have been when I was drunk and narrating to a drunken audience. But the truth probably is that it wasn't well-told then either. Rather my critical faculties were impaired and the listeners easily entertained. Anyway, I need to get it down in writing now before my memory dims too much and is replaced by fantasy. That would be a shame, because what happened there over a period of six months contains the essence of what is right and what is wrong about the U.S. Foreign Service as an institution and those who work in it.

First, I will offer some thumbnail sketches of the main characters, more-or-less in rank order.

Jose Figueres became president of Costa Rica for the third time in 1970. He had first led the country in 1948 after winning a civil war. He stepped aside in 1949 for a civilian government. In 1953 he won a democratic election as head of the PLN, a nationalistic party affiliated with like-minded social democrats in Latin America and Europe. He and Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela were seen as the prototype for modern, democratic leaders who would lead Latin America into the 20th century. The 1970 election victory reaffirmed for Figueres the role of father of his country. "Don Pepe" while nationalistic, was not anti-American. He was married to an American, had spent considerable time in the U.S., spoke excellent English and had accepted money from the CIA off-and-on over many years. He was also venal. His grandiose business schemes nearly all lost money. So he took bribes of various sorts to make ends meet. But Pepe was too conscious of his role as Costa Rica's half-pint George Washington to betray his country. People often thought they had bought Pepe. The CIA did. In fact, they had only rented him to do pretty much what he thought was in Costa Rica's national interest anyway.

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Walter Ploeser was a former Republican Congressman from St. Louis, Missouri, who was appointed U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica by Richard Nixon in 1970. Although Ploeser had been ambassador to Paraguay during the Eisenhower administration, he spoke no Spanish. When not in Congress, Ploeser was an insurance salesman and major Republican fund raiser. He was also a cold warrior of the McCarthy stripe. Subtleties of international affairs were lost on Walter. As part of his briefing process before going to Costa Rica, Walter was told something that only a very few people knew: the CIA had a listening device in the living room of Figueres' country home and had heard him making a deal with the communists which threatened the security interests of the U.S. Walter was charged with keeping Figueres from allowing the Reds to take over Costa Rica. He loved it. Ploeser was also venal. He systematically falsified expense vouchers and tried to fire the budget and fiscal officer who refused to pay them. Among his other charms, Walter was anti-Semitic, anti-black and anti-Hispanic.

Ellwood "Pete" Rabenold was the Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) — Ploeser's deputy. He was a career Foreign Service officer of approximately 50 years who had distinguished himself mainly by his mediocrity. Pete had been the Consul General in Guayaquil, Ecuador before being picked by the Latin American Bureau of the State Department to babysit political appointee Ploeser. This ordinary guy hadn't done anything terribly wrong in his many years in the Foreign Service, nor had he done anything terribly right. In fact, he had done very little at all. Neither stupid nor smart, he went along and got along, but was mostly invisible. He saw his job as DCM in terms of keeping Ploeser happy. He provided little guidance or leadership in the substantive work of the embassy. He was more at ease keeping tabs on administrative/housekeeping matters. Pete's most noteworthy characteristic one was an overpowering B.O. which would wither flowers. The other was a total lack of any convictions. Pete seemed to remain oblivious to something so painfully apparent to others. Maybe his wife liked funky guys. He never betrayed a principle because he never had any.

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Earl Williamson, who was about 60, was the CIA station chief and on his last tour. He planned to retire in Costa Rica. Earl's wife, Beba, was a Cuban exile and about 30 years younger. She loved to flirt and considered herself a hot ticket, although it is unclear that she ever actually played around. Earl was a drunk. He was also a 100% cold warrior who hated Figueres when in his cups, which was often. Earl made flagrant anti-Figueres remarks—which is to say he wasn't very bright. Earl's job was known to the Costa Rican government, and just about everybody else. It was CIA practice to notify the station chief and his deputy to “friendly” governments and sometimes to those not so friendly. Earl, the ambassador and maybe one other CIA officer were the only people in the embassy who knew about the bug at Figueres' house. All together, they added up to an accident waiting to happen.

Larry Harrison was one of the Agency for International Development (AID) bright lights in Latin America. He was smart, active and articulate—perfect for the Kennedy and Johnson years. He had to be to direct the AID mission in Costa Rica before he was 40. Since AID had resources to give away, Larry was an important person in the embassy and with the Costa Rican government. He was particularly close to Pepe Figueres' foster son. During his rapid rise in the bureaucracy, Larry had never learned about humility. He could be arrogant and high-handed at times. He also was a poor judge of human character and trusted too many of the wrong people. But Larry was a liberal who worked hard at doing good for Costa Rica. This was more than enough to make him suspect with Walter Ploeser and the Nixon White House. Little wonder that the ambassador saw Larry as a rival to be eliminated at the first opportunity.

And then there was Sam Hart, your narrator, who was the chief of the economic and commercial section in the embassy and the AID public administrative division. At age 37, I was trying to end a disastrous marriage to a woman who believed my children were scheming monsters. The fact that I could do my job in little Costa Rica in 20 hours a week left plenty of time and energy for mischief. My relations with the ambassador were

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unsymmetrical. He thought I was a good economic technician. I came to see him as a disgrace to the U.S. government—a Fascist capable of doing our country real harm. As the months passed after his arrival in Costa Rica, it became clear that Walter Ploeser was a liar, a thief, a bigot, lazy and a coward. And because of his connections in Washington, he seemed to be invulnerable. Rabenold and I were far from close, but we got along. He didn't bother me and vice versa. Larry and I were a study in creative tension. I admired his intelligence and vision. He appreciated my professionalism. He was unhappy when I questioned some of his goals and methods. I disliked his arrogance. He was my boss when I had on my AID hat but not when I was in my Department role. We were two strong personalities who cooperated most of the time in an uneasy alliance.

Earl Williamson seemed to see me as a good ole macho southern boy. On the personal level I liked Earl well enough. Professionally I had no regard for him and was appalled that the CIA had given him a station.

The fact that Earl was in Costa Rica was symptomatic of a general problem. In the overall scheme of things, this staunch little democracy didn't count for much in the geopolitical picture. It wasn't worth wasting top quality U.S. resources on. Thus you could send Ploeser and Rabenold and Williamson there. Since nothing important happened in Costa Rica, what harm could they do? With luck, the answer would have been “not much.” As it turned out, their ignorance about Costa Rica's people and political institutions, their lack of principles and the ideological mindset of the Nixon administration nearly caused a disaster.

This is as good a place as any to describe Costa Rica of 1970/71. It had been a solid democracy since 1949. Its two million people enjoyed good public education and health services. There was a large and growing middle class and income disparities were moderate by Latin American standards. No president could succeed himself. The two main political parties had won the top offices about an equal number of times. The powers of the president were limited, however. The Unicameral Legislative assembly had considerable clout and there was an independent judiciary. Business associations, labor

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unions, autonomous institutions and other groups made up a strong system of checks and balances. Costa Rica had no armed forces. The national police, the Guardia Civil, received some paramilitary training. In the two instances where Costa Rica has been attacked (both times by Nicaragua), it relied successfully on the OAS (Organization of American States) to come to its rescue. The idea of a loyal opposition between elections had taken root. The economy depended mostly on the export of coffee and bananas. With its high propensity to consume, Costa Rica would sink into economic crisis when the prices of its key exports fell. But people muddled through, and the country could rightly be called happy. The pace of life was slow, few people were ever hungry and nature was generally kind.

Walter Ploeser wandered into this little political utopia a few months into 1970. He came with good notices. At least he had previous diplomatic experience—as contrasted with Nixon's first choice for the post, a large campaign contributor who owned a chain of department stores. Ploeser had a pleasant manner learned in business and on the campaign trail. He accepted his need for an interpreter, but was horrified when it turned out to be a Hispanic/American. Consequently, if a Costa Rican didn't speak English, he was out of touch with the U.S. ambassador. Most days he would only be in the office a few hours, and much of that time was used tending to personal business and correspondence. He took little interest in the everyday operation of the embassy. That was seen as a plus too. Walter took frequent trips to Washington and Panama. When in country, this little roly-poly man of 65 or so filled out his days with hunting, fishing and golf.

In the months following this benign beginning, several disquieting tendencies began to develop which only later took on significance. Although Ploeser did not interfere with the Political Section's generally favorable evaluation of Figueres performance as president, he increasingly made cryptic critical remarks about Pepe in discussions with the staff. At first, the remarks seemed to be linked to Pepe's financial shenanigans, which were public knowledge. They then took on a "I know something you don't" air of mystery. Those of us who thought anything about this assumed it had to do with Ploeser's aversion to liberals like Figueres. Certainly the official relationship between them was no better than

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cool but correct. The personal chemistry was all bad. Another disturbing development was Ploeser's dislike and resentment of Larry Harrison. It was as if every morning Walter would ask his bathroom mirror "who is the most beautiful of them all." And the mirror would always answer "Larry". Walter decided to feed Larry a poisoned apple. Larry contributed to Ploeser's enmity by keeping his close personal contacts with the Figueres family and high government officials. He did little to counter Ploeser's conviction that Larry considered himself as an independent U.S. government force. Finally, by the last quarter of 1970 the Costa Rican rumor mill was producing a barrage of stories that local right-wing political forces were plotting a coup to depose Figueres. By December, a mysterious ship carrying arms was reported to have been seen on Costa Rica's Pacific coast. Newspapers speculated about the ghost ship's origins and about possible arms caches. Not surprisingly, some saw the sinister hand of the CIA. This speculation found some resonance in high places and among friends of the U.S. in the chilly environment prevailing in our bilateral relations. To many of us in the embassy, the situation was maddening.

The main factors which lent some credence to the idea that the U.S. might be involved in a plot against a democratically elected government were:

- the antipathy between Ploeser and Figueres.
- the general orientation of U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America after Allende's election.
- the conduct of Earl Williamson.

In late 1970 Earl had made an off-hand remark while drunk that Pepe might not be around by New Year's. This story was taken straight back to Figueres. Earl also liked to hang around and booze with opposition political figures at the Club Union in San Jose. In the

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shank of a long post-Christmas evening, Earl was heard singing along to a round of anti-Figueres songs. This was also duly reported to the president. He was not amused.

A few days into the New Year, Ploeser was called in by the Foreign Minister and told that Williamson was no longer welcome in Costa Rica because of his conduct. It is unclear whether an official declaration of persona non grata or something less formal was discussed. In either case, Earl was going to be history. Stories about what had happened promptly hit the local press. Notwithstanding denials by the embassy and the Foreign Minister, the press accounts were widely accepted. Things were very tense, but Earl had not left when the last week in January arrived. That was when the senior embassy staff learned that a special envoy from Washington would pay a short visit to San Jose. His name was Alan Stewart, and he had been the U.S. ambassador to Venezuela in the 1950's. As such he was well and favorably known to Romulo Betancourt's friends, like Pepe Figueres, in the democratic left in Latin America.

On the last Friday night in January, I had a couple of beers with the embassy TGIF regulars at a bar next door to the chancery. Larry Harrison had planned to work a little late, so I had arranged to get a ride home with him. He had an official car with a two-way radio and as we drove it was mentioned by one of the embassy drivers that Alan Stewart was at Pepe Figueres' farm, La Lucha. Larry thought that significant and was sure Stewart was delivering some important message from Washington. Larry dropped me off at home. I had dinner and went to bed about 11 PM without thinking much more about the Stewart matter.

At approximately 3 AM the phone woke me. It was Larry. He said that some unbelievable things were happening and that he needed to talk to me. I told him to come over and about 15 minutes later he arrived.

He related the following. After he got home, he had learned from Pepe's foster son the purpose of Stewart's visit. At La Lucha Pepe was told that we had incontrovertible information that he was cooperating with the USSR and Costa Rica's Communist Party

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and that he had better stop. Specifically, Pepe was pushing to legalize the communist party (which already was functioning under another name), to open diplomatic relations with the USSR and to agree to some communists being hired in minor government posts. In return, he had received money from the local and Soviet communists. Although Pepe was not told so, this information came from overheard conversations with the Costa Rican communist head and a Soviet diplomat in Pepe's living room. Pepe was deeply shaken at this warning and didn't deny that he planned to do most of the above. He said that it was Costa Rica's sovereign right to make such decisions, just as the U.S. had a communist party and diplomatic relations with the USSR.

Larry decided on the basis of what he heard from the foster son that he needed to talk to his friend and mentor, John Crimmins, who was the senior Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department's Latin American Bureau. Although Larry already had scheduled a business trip to Washington on the early flight the next morning, he thought he needed to find out what was going on before he left. He called Crimmins from the foster son's house and was told to keep his mouth shut until he got to Washington. Larry made a second call demanding to know more now and Crimmins hung up on him. When Larry returned home after midnight, he saw what he thought were Costa Rican security people and somebody from the CIA station in the nearby streets watching his house. Not long after, the DCM, Pete Rabenold, had called and said the ambassador wanted Larry to come to his residence at once for a talk. Larry wouldn't say yes or nay and Pete wouldn't be more specific about the topic on the ambassador's mind. That is when Larry called me.

He asked me what he should do. I said he couldn't refuse to talk to Ploeser. Larry said he was afraid that the Marine guards or the CIA people would somehow take him into custody if he went. I said I would go with him and witness all that was said and done. I accompanied Larry back to his house and he called Rabenold and agreed to go see Ploeser. Rabenold told him that was no longer necessary but he was to have no further contact with the Costa Ricans or Washington before he left. Within a few hours I had taken Larry to the airport and seen him off. We were being watched by a CIA agent named Steve



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Vermillion. After Larry was gone, I went up to Steve and asked if he was having a nice day. He was obviously embarrassed. Then I went home and got some sleep, feeling I had done a reasonable night's work.

The following day, Sunday, I was at the golf club getting ready to play when Rabenold came up and said he wanted to see me in his office first thing Monday. He added that I was in deep trouble over the events of early Saturday. You can believe that put a hitch in my golf swing. Over the next 22 hours or so I tried to figure out what I had done wrong and came up blank.

By 8:30 AM on Monday I was in Rabenold's office. He came right to the point by saying that Larry Harrison had committed treason and that I seemed to be involved too. I responded that if the subject was treason, I had nothing to say to him and suggested that we get on a plane and go to Washington at once. Pete backed off some at that point and said he didn't believe that I had committed treason, but the ambassador did. What he needed, he continued, was to know what I knew about Larry's conversation with Costa Ricans on Friday night and early Saturday morning. I asked what treasonous act had occurred. He would only say that Larry had passed highly classified information to a foreign government. He wanted me to tell him to whom Larry had spoken and what had been said. I told Pete to ask Larry. My response wasn't needed in any case, he implied.

A moment of truth had arrived. All I really knew was that Larry had talked to Pepe's foster son and that the latter had described what had happened at La Lucha. I had no knowledge of Larry betraying any secrets. Larry's two conversations with John Crimmins over an open telephone line were another matter. It was clear by Larry's own account that he had lost control and said some explosive things about the U.S. government's actions in Costa Rica. I was pretty sure that I knew nothing that had not already been provided or soon would be by Larry or John Crimmins. Still, I was very reluctant to give anything in response to the tactics of threats and intimidation being used by Rabenold/Ploeser. Also, would I somehow be betraying a trust? It was a very hard choice which had to be made quickly. To this day

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I don't know whether I did the right thing. I told Rabenold what Larry had told me about the talk with the foster son. Rabenold seemed satisfied. That ended the most surreal 30 minutes of my life. My head was spinning as I left his office.

Within minutes I was on the phone to Polly Harrison, Larry's very bright wife. I told her all that had happened. Shortly thereafter I reached Larry in Washington and repeated the story. Over the next two or three weeks, I had frequent conversations with both Harrisons.

The "treason" which Larry was wrongly suspected of having committed was the betrayal of CIA "sources and methods" - i.e. the bug in Pepe's living room. In fact, he didn't learn of that until later. However, Larry was guilty, even in my mind, of a massive failure of judgment. The calls to Crimmins were not only out of line in terms of the chain-of-command, they also were serious security violations over an open phone. Furthermore, they were totally unnecessary unless some kind of coup against Figueres had to be stopped. It didn't appear that way to me.

The next few weeks were a mental jumble to me. Lacking any ground for criminal charges against Larry or to have him summarily fired from AID, Ploeser made a deal with the State Dept/AID that Larry would not be allowed to return to Costa Rica. His wife and children were permitted to stay in San Jose until the school year ended in April or May. Earl Williamson departed after a decent interval and was not immediately replaced. There was loads of speculation in the Costa Rican press about what was happening. Embassy and Foreign Ministry sources denied that anything was amiss. When instructed along this line by Rabenold, I told him to stick it—while I might lie for myself, I said, I wouldn't lie for my government because it was never the right thing to do. The Miami Herald, which had the best U.S. coverage of Latin America, picked up on the story and sent a reporter to San Jose. It published an article or two and an editorial about the tense mutual climate of suspicions which had developed in U.S./Costa Rican relations and put most of the blame on the U.S. I talked to the reporter off the record.

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In a sense, this little drama seemed to have ended in a standoff! Ploeser's liberal bete noire, Larry Harrison, had been removed as had Pepe's right-wing enemy, Earl Williamson. In fact, the core issue of U.S. policy towards the Figueres administration remained. I hoped that the State Department would insist that a full-scale review be made including CIA involvement, if any, in Costa Rican coup plotting. It was evident that nobody in authority in Washington had any interest in such an exercise. The Secretary of State, William Rogers, was totally overshadowed by Henry Kissinger as NSC chief. Rogers shied away from all tough cases anyway, and the conduct of a well-placed, Republican political ambassador was a tough nut. The other, William Rogers, the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, was a Democrat new to the job. He wasn't anxious to take this on either. Dick Breen, the career AID officer in charge of Central American Affairs in State, was concerned about policy, but he had no real power.

As the public hubbub subsided, a couple of like-minded embassy colleagues and I decided that we would use two in-channel opportunities to force the issue:

—an upcoming State Department inspection of the entire embassy operation.

—an annual written, assessment of U.S. goals and objectives in Costa Rica, the Country Analysis and Strategy Paper (CASP). This was prepared by the embassy country team and then considered by a senior interagency group in Washington.

As I recall, the two State Department inspectors arrived in February. The senior man had a political reporting background and the other was an administrative specialist. In preliminary private meetings with the inspectors, I chummed the waters a bit with the

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idea that all was not well in the embassy, but I refrained from specifics. My standing with Ploeser and Rabenold since late January had been ambiguous. Neither knew enough economics to challenge my work in my assigned duties, but I had lost their confidence as a team player—i.e., somebody who followed orders without question. It was not something they would raise with the inspectors, however. My hope that the inspection would deal with core issues ended when the senior man had a massive heart attack and died in the ambassador's office during a staff meeting. The admin guy continued the inspection alone and delivered a complete whitewash. Ironically, the inspector also talked the ambassador into approving a meritorious honor award for my economic reporting.

That set the stage for the CASP exercise in March/April. The drafting committee was made up of two members of the Political Section, a CIA representative, a military rep and myself. We had long hours of discussion about what needed to be said and then began writing. I did the editing and redrafts. We concluded that U.S. interests in Costa Rica were best served by a prosperous, democratic society. The U.S. should continue to support progress to this end. Costa Rican institutions and the diffusion of political power protected the country from aberrations in the political system. We postulated that even if Pepe Figueres for some crazy reason wanted to sell his homeland to the Soviets, he would fail. Whatever reaction Rabenold had in the CASP, he kept it to himself. Ploeser was quick to react. He called a couple of us in and said he disagreed with all our major conclusions. He thought that legalization of the communist party, the opening of a Soviet embassy in San Jose and the presence of a handful of communists in the government bureaucracy could lead to a communist takeover. This was part of a Soviet plan to use Costa Rica as a base to take over Panama and, eventually, the Canal. The Canal was the key to choking the U.S. economically and militarily. He instructed us to rewrite the CASP to reflect this analysis. We pointed out that the CASP was an interagency exercise not subject to the control of one person. If he wanted his views added as a dissent, that would be fine, but we couldn't accept his ideas. In that case, Ploeser said, he would write his own CASP and we could

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dissent. This struck us as funny because he hadn't written a coherent paragraph since arriving in Costa Rica.

As it turned out, the ambassador's CASP was drafted by a U.S. Army MP Lt. Colonel who was the chief of the embassy military advisory mission, who most faithfully represented Ploeser's views. With this alternative CASP, the chiefs of various U.S. government agencies were forced to chose sides. When the dust settled, the Ploeser CASP was signed by the author and the ambassador. The first CASP was backed by everybody else, including the new acting CIA chief. Pete Rabenold signed neither. After lots of phone calls to Washington, the embassy was finally instructed to send both papers to the Latin American Bureau. There they were immediately buried in a filing cabinet with the hope that the whole episode, coming so quickly on the heels of the Harrison/Williamson farce would be forgotten. No such luck. Word had leaked all over State, CIA and elsewhere about what had happened. The Miami Herald took up the cudget against Ploeser again, calling for his replacement. I fully briefed a staffer of Florida Congressman Dante Fascell, Chief of the House Subcommittee on L.A., who came to San Jose to find out what was going on. The embassy was not full of happy campers.

I, for one, had decided that my position was untenable and that it was time to move on. Also, a transfer would allow me to split with my wife. The children and I would go one way and she would go the other. Personnel said they would see what could be done about a new post. About the middle of April I had heard nothing and had arranged an appointment with Assistant Secretary Rogers, who was in San Jose for an Organization of American States meeting. The day before my meeting was scheduled, I was talking with the wife of one of the embassy officers when she commented on how coy I was being about my upcoming transfer. She had heard from her husband, who had heard from his boss, who had heard from a golfing partner of Ploeser, who had heard Ploeser say a day or two previously on the golf course that I was leaving. He said that he had not arranged it.

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I was more than a little upset. I stormed into Rabenold's office and asked what he knew and why I had heard about my transfer fifth hand. All he knew, he said, was that I was headed to Chile. He had no explanation for why I had not been told. Within 24 hours I had talked to my new prospective boss in Santiago and discovered that I was slated to be the third man in the joint Embassy economic operation. That was two steps below my present position. Although he did a good sell on the job, I told him I couldn't accept. Next I called the ARA personnel man in Washington, a total jerk named Sheldon Krys. Sheldon told me that I had asked for a transfer and Santiago was all that was available. His attitude was that Personnel was doing me a favor and that I should be grateful. I told Krys that wasn't good enough. It looked too much like I was being punished for something. I asked if the L.A. Bureau would release me if I found a better job elsewhere. He said okay provided the other bureau would supply a replacement for me: on that basis I bought a ticket to Washington with my own money. Within 24 hours I had found a job I wanted which was a step up. I notified Krys and returned to San Jose. The following day Krys called to say that L.A. Bureau would not release me. The whole business about letting me go had been a lie. Another call came from Chile. Feeling very tired and alone, I gave in and accepted the job. By early May the kids and I were headed south. I had a bad efficiency report in my file to show for the effort.

Are there any morals or lessons to be learned from this long and tangled tale? Not much, I'm afraid. Oh, one can go on about virtue being its own reward. Of course, that is true. In retrospect, I wouldn't have behaved any differently. I should have known before that courage was in short supply in the Foreign Service like everywhere else. Certainly I found out who were real friends. Peter Kreis, the acting AID Director was one of the most solid citizens.

As to these people involved, there were no real heroes. Some people took their professional obligations seriously, but most did not. To me, Ploeser and Williamson were not the real villains. I saw them as befuddled, pseudo-macho, drunk, cold warriors. They

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thought they were the good guys. My candidate for public enemy #1 was Rabenold. He knew better and could have blown the whistle, but he was a total coward whore. A couple of other senior staffers were from the same mold when the heat got high. If any proof were needed that the world ain't fair, this case gives it. Rabenold got a promotion. Ploeser stayed on in Costa Rica for a full two year tour and then returned to private life in St. Louis. He was ineffective the rest of his tour, but Figueres thought the price in Washington for throwing him out was too high. U.S. aid to Costa Rica continued and no more was heard about Pepe selling the country to the Russians. The Soviets opened an embassy, but Figueres never allowed the local communist party to change its name from the PVP (Populist Vanguard Party). The two CASPs incident had rendered Ploeser impotent by making him appear ridiculous. Figueres served out his time without further trouble. Larry Harrison had several low profile jobs in Washington before he finally got another AID mission in Central America. He retired shortly after he reached 50.

Six weeks after leaving San Jose I was invited to Washington to receive the Rivkin Award for "creative dissent" from the American Foreign Service Association. Secretary of State Rogers gave it to me in public without realizing that the award would not have been necessary had he been doing his job properly. It turned out that being sent to Chile, even in semi-disgrace, was like Brer Rabbit in the briar patch. It led to four of the most interesting and intense four years of my life. But that is another story.

Attachment 2The Military Takeover in Chile - September 11, 1973

September 15, 1973

It had been very tense with rumors everywhere about an impending military move for a week before September 11th, but as I drove to work that morning nothing seemed unusual until I arrived at the edge of the downtown area about 8:30 a.m. Carabineros were routing traffic away from certain streets, but I was able to get to within a few blocks of the Embassy before having to talk my way through a roadblock. Before entering the Embassy,

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I had a look around the square in front of the Presidential offices, the Moneda, and the entire area was cordoned off by police. It wasn't until I got upstairs that I heard the Chilean military had come on the air over several radio stations saying the Commanders of the Army, Navy and Air Force, together with the head of the police, had decided to take over the government.

Because some of the coup units had been slow in moving, however, they had not captured Allende at his home. Instead, he had made it to the Moneda together with several ministers. Before the last of the pro-government (Marxist) radio stations went off the air under threat at about 9:30, Allende admitted in a farewell broadcast that the odds against him were overwhelming and more or less advised his people not to resist. Army troops and tanks began to arrive at the Moneda (the first coup movements had begun at 3 a.m.) and they demanded Allende's surrender by 11 a.m. or the Moneda would be bombed and subjected to ground fire. Some of the people in the Moneda came out, but not Allende. Firing broke out in the square, presumably when pro-UP sharpshooters in the nearby buildings started shooting at the military. Allende still had not surrendered at 11 a.m. and by 11:30 there was heavy firing against the Moneda. At noon the planes arrived and dropped bombs and rocketed the building. Not too long afterward Allende asked for a five-minute cease-fire so he could surrender. The military said this was impossible because they were receiving sniper fire from all around. About 1:30p.m. troops entered the burning building. Although it wasn't announced until that night, they found Allende's body. The official version is suicide. Who knows?

Practically all the Embassy employees were at the office when the fighting started and steps were taken immediately to get people into protected parts of the building. During the day we received perhaps 50-60 rounds in the outer offices, but nobody even got a scratch. All kinds of organization was required to alert the US citizens in Santiago to stay off the streets, to keep Washington informed constantly on what was going on, to answer phone calls, etc. Luckily, during the entire period after the coup started all utilities continued to function. In a way, we all had a better idea of what had to be done because of



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the experience of the abortive coup of June 29 which occurred at nearly the same time of day.

Our main sources of news during the day were the radio and calls from various eyewitnesses. By about 4 p.m. the firing in the middle of town had died down but there were still lots of snipers. The decision was made to let everybody not needed for Embassy operations go home to beat the 6 p.m. curfew. Since not much interest was apparent in economic or commercial matters, I dismissed my whole crew with the idea of coming in to spell the overnight staff the following morning. As it turned out, we didn't return to the office until 2 p.m. on September 13 because the curfew was kept in effect until then.

Rebecca and David had gone to school on the 11th but were sent home shortly after they arrived. I talked to both of them on the phone during the day to make sure they kept off the streets and knew I was okay. They were more curious than frightened.

The Military Junta came on radio and television that night to explain why they had acted and to reassure the people. Meanwhile, all the head Marxists were being told on the radio to turn themselves in to the authorities within 48 hours or face the consequences. Foreigners illegally in the country were told to surrender and it was announced that relations would be broken with Cuba because of the Embassy's interference in Chile's internal affairs. Some 150 Cubans were shipped out the 13th. Warnings went out that anybody having arms or resisting the military would be dealt with severely, and evidently the threat was carried out. Clearing operations, usually the painful location and killing of snipers, continued downtown. Lots of factories and offices suspected of having arms caches were raided. The bloodshed is still not over, but there as yet are no figures on the dead and wounded.

By September 12 statements of support for the military had begun to pour in from all kinds of organizations which had been opposed to the Allende Government. This included the major opposition political parties. My next door neighbor was able to keep me posted on

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what the Christian Democrats were doing. The military chiefs were officially sworn in as the ruling Junta that night along with an almost completely military cabinet.

Becky baked me a pineapple upside-down cake for my birthday on the 12th because I expected to be in the office all the following day and night. My relief crew of officers and secretaries did reach the Embassy early the next afternoon complete with bedding, food and overnight kit. So I spent 40 hours dealing with all kinds of crisis problems with only a little sleep. We now have 24 hour shifts with 3 separate crews but because of the need to get certain relief programs started I am having to work every day. I'm impressed with the way everybody on the staff has pitched in and done a calm, businesslike job. Harry Shlaudeman is heading up the Task Force on Chile in Washington. I'm hoping we will be back to something close to normal schedule after this weekend, but it will all depend on how things develop.

Telecommunications with the outside world are slowly being restored. I have a call pending to Mother now, which I hope to get through tonight. Commercial cable traffic is presently only available to media reporters and diplomatic missions. For three days there were no facilities to the outside and we were sending messages for our diplomatic friends to their capitals. In crises of this kind everybody seems to turn to us. Yesterday the Ambassador decided to begin accepting messages from individual Americans to people in the States saying they were safe. No telling when the mail will resume. Planes won't begin flying until next week.

There was lots of excitement in our own neighborhood in the early hours of September 14. The military were watching a Cuban Embassy house about 100 yards from here and two men showed up. A big gun battle ensued and the two were killed. The maids hustled Rebecca and David away from the windows, but it was all over by then. Another man being chased by the military was killed about 50 yards away from us the same night, according to the neighbors. Each night foot and helicopter patrols are operating. The military says there were 10,000 foreign extremists in Chile and seems determined to hunt

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them down. To the extent they are successful it will mean that much less of a continuing threat to security, including the safety of the diplomatic community. Air and ground attacks are continuing against extremist strongholds in some of the shanty towns scattered around Santiago. Apparently things are quiet around the rest of Chile.

Since there seems to be so much criticism in the US and elsewhere over what has happened here, I will try to put it in some perspective. Allende was elected in 1970 with 36% of the vote. He was basically a decent man, I believe, but he was committed to change Chile totally into a socialist country when he had neither the majority of Chileans behind him nor the congress or courts. From the beginning he was in a race against time. The hard-liners, principally Socialists, pushed him to go faster and faster since they never believed "the revolution" could be carried out within existing laws. Increasingly, the Allende government ignored the democratic process, for example, by failing to carry out court orders. A struggle over government seizures of private businesses developed between the executive and Congress. Allende and the Communist Party seemed inclined to make some compromises to reach an agreement with the opposition, but they were blocked by the extremists on the left.

Throughout the unfolding of this drama the military, which was sworn to uphold constitutionality, was the final arbiter. As the country became totally polarized, the economy was wrecked by Marxist policies, the extremists became bolder and armed themselves, and a series of paralyzing strikes hit the country, this became increasingly difficult to do. In the last six months most of the military became convinced that things just could not go on as they were without tearing Chile apart. Many attempts were made to try to get Allende to compromise with the opposition, establish a techno-military cabinet, and consolidate what had been done. Allende knew that this would mean a split within his own coalition and always backed away, stalling for time. He probably was haunted by the thought that history would call him a traitor to his ideals.

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In the face of these facts, sentiment for a coup grew within the armed forces. Standing in the way were Army Chief General Pratts and the major troop commanders in the Santiago area, who were generally sympathetic to Allende.

In retrospect the final straws were the transport strike which showed that Allende was unable to govern and attempts by the ultra left to subvert the lower ranks of the armed forces. Pratts resigned as did the others who opposed a coup. The new military leaders were much more men of action. Even they would probably have preferred that Allende stay on as a figurehead or go peacefully into exile, but it was not to be. I doubt they wanted him to become a martyr.

Nobody knows yet where Chile is headed. The military say they will retain power until the society's wounds heal and normality is restored and then will step down. The problems they face are tremendous: a divided population, a wrecked economy, and unpopularity in many countries overseas. At this point I'm convinced the vast majority of Chileans favor what has happened although they may be saddened by the lives, perhaps thousands, lost. It will be interesting to see what happens to public opinion after the military force belt-tightening and try to put the country back to work. The Chilean military have essentially three models to chose from in their future policies: what has happened in Brazil, Argentina or Peru.

Within a short time the US will recognize the new government and they will come to us for large economic assistance. I have no doubt we will help, but probably not to the extent the Chileans expect. The Embassy's friendly Economic/Commercial Section will have a large role to play. I welcome this because what we do can benefit this basically very nice country and people.

So that's about it. Don't look for heroes or villains. What happened here was very much like a Greek tragedy with each player committed to a course, almost against his will in some cases.

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End of interview